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*THE TRUANTS.*¹

BY A. E. W. MASON.

CHAPTER XXXI.

AT THE RÉSERVE.

TONY STRETTON walked quickly down from the Villa Pontignard to the station. There he learned that an hour must elapse before a train to Eze was due. Inaction was at this moment intolerable to him. Even though he should get to Eze not a minute the sooner, he must hurry upon his way. He could not wait upon this platform for an hour, suspense so tortured him. He went out upon the road and began to run. He ran very quickly. The road turned sharply round the shoulder of a hill, and Stretton saw in front of him the lights of Monte Carlo. They were bunched in great white clusters, they were strung in festoons in the square and the streets. They made a golden crescent about the dark quiet waters of the bay. Looking down from this shoulder of the hill upon the town at such an hour one seems to be looking upon a town of fairy-land; one expects a sweet and delicate music to float upwards from its houses and charm the ears. Tony's one thought was that beyond that place of lights lay Eze. He came to an electric tram which was on the point of starting. He entered it and it rattled him quickly down the hill.

At Monte Carlo he sprang into the first carriage which he saw waiting for a fare, and bade the coachman drive him quickly out to Eze. The night had come; above his head the stars shone very brightly from a dark sky of velvet. The carriage passed out of the

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town; the villas grew more scarce; the open road glimmered ahead of him a riband of white; the sea murmured languorously upon the shore.

At this moment, in the lonely restaurant towards which Tony was driving in such haste, Lionel Callon and Millie Stretton were sitting down to dinner. The table was laid in the small daintily furnished room which opened on to the terrace. The windows stood wide, and the lazy murmur of the waves entered in. The white cloth shone with silver, a great bowl of roses stood in the centre and delicately perfumed the air. Thither Millie had come in fulfilment of that promise made on a midnight of early spring in Regent's Park. The colour burned prettily on her cheeks, she had dressed herself in a pink gown of lace, jewels shone on her arms and at her neck. She was, perhaps, a little feverish in her gaiety, her laughter was perhaps a little over loud. Indeed, every now and then her heart sank in fear within her, and she wished herself far away. But here Lionel Callon was at his ease. He knew the methods by which victory was to be won. There was no suggestion of triumph in his manner. He was considerate, and most deferential, and with no more than a hint of passion in the deference.

'You have come,' he said. His eyes rested upon hers, and he left them to express his gratitude. He raised her hand to his lips and gently took the cloak from her shoulders. 'You have had a long journey. But you are not tired.' He placed her chair for her at the table and sat opposite. He saw that she was uneasy. He spoke no word which might alarm her.

Meanwhile Tony was drawing nearer. He reached the hotel at Eze, and drove through its garden to the door.

'Is Lady Stretton in the hotel?' he asked.

'No, sir. Her ladyship went out to dinner nearly an hour ago.'

'Thank you,' said Tony. 'She arrived this afternoon, I think?'

'Yes, sir. What name shall I give when she returns?'

'No name,' said Tony. And he ordered his coachman to drive back to the road.

When he had reached it he directed the man again.

'Towards Beaulieu,' he said; and in a little while, on his left hand, below the level of the road, he saw the lights of the *Réserve*. He stopped at the gate, dismissed his carriage, and walked down

the winding drive to the door. He walked into the restaurant. It was empty. A waiter came forward to him.

'I wish you to take me at once to Mr. Callon,' he said. He spoke in a calm, matter-of-fact voice. But the waiter nevertheless hesitated. Tony wore the clothes in which he had travelled to Roquebrune. He was covered with dust, his face was haggard and stern. He had nothing in common with the dainty little room of lights and flowers and shining silver, and the smartly dressed couple who were dining there. The waiter guessed that his irruption would be altogether inconvenient.

'Mr. Callon!' he stammered. 'He has gone out.'

Tony heard the rattle of a metal cover upon a dish. He looked in the direction whence the sound came—he looked to the right-hand side of the restaurant. A door stood open there, and in the passage beyond the door he saw a waiter pass carrying the dish. Moreover, the man who had spoken to him made yet another mistake. He noticed the direction of Tony's glance, and he made a quick movement as though to bar that passage.

'He is here,' said Tony; and he thrust the waiter aside. He crossed the restaurant quickly and entered the passage. The passage ran parallel to the restaurant; and, at the end towards the terrace, there was another door upon the opposite side. The waiter with the dish had his hand upon the door-handle, but he turned at the sound of Stretton's step. He, too, noticed the disorder of Tony's dress. At the same moment the man in the restaurant shouted in a warning voice:

'Jules!'

Jules stood in front of the door.

'Monsieur, this room is private,' said he.

'Yet I will take the liberty to intrude,' said Tony quietly.

From behind the door there came the sound of a man's voice which Tony did not know. He had, indeed, never heard it before. Then a woman's laugh rang out; and the sound of it angered Tony beyond endurance. He recognised it beyond the possibility of mistake. It was his wife who was laughing so gaily there behind the closed door. He thought of the years he had spent in the determination to regain his wife's esteem, to free himself from her contempt. For the moment he could have laughed bitterly at his persistence as at some egregious folly. It seemed all waste—waste of time, waste of endeavour, waste of suffering. She was laughing! And with Lionel Callon for her companion! The cold,

black nights of the North Sea and its gales; the arid sands of the Sahara; all his long service for her ending in that crowning act of desertion—the story was clear in his mind from beginning to end, detailed and complete. And she was laughing in there with Lionel Callon! Her laughter was to him as some biting epigram which epitomised the way in which she had spent the years of his absence. His anger got the better of his self-control.

‘Stand away,’ he cried, in a low savage voice, to the waiter. And since the man did not instantly move, he seized him by the shoulders and dragged him from the door.

‘Monsieur!’ the man cried aloud, in a frightened voice, and the dish which he was carrying fell with a clatter on to the floor. Inside the room the laughter suddenly ceased. Tony listened for a second. He could not hear even a whisper. There was complete silence. He smiled rather grimly to himself; he was thinking that this was not, at all events, the silence of contempt.

Could he have seen through the door into the room he would have been yet more convinced. All the gaiety vanished in an instant from Millie’s face. She was sitting opposite the door; she sat and stared at it in terror. The blood ebbed from her cheeks, leaving them as white as paper.

‘Monsieur!’ she repeated, in so low a whisper that even Callon on the other side of the small table hardly heard the word. Her lips were dry and she moistened them. ‘Monsieur!’ she whispered again, and the whisper was a question. She had no definite suspicion who ‘Monsieur’ was; she did not define him as her husband. She only understood that somehow she was trapped. The sudden clatter of the dish upon the floor, the loudness of the waiter’s cry, which was not a mere protest, but also a cry of fear, terrified her; they implied violence. She was trapped. She sat paralysed upon her chair, staring across the table over Callon’s shoulder at the door. Callon meanwhile said not a word. He had been sitting with his back to the door, and he twisted round in his chair. To both of them it seemed ages before the handle was turned. Yet so short was the interval of time that they could hardly have reached the terrace through the open window had they sprung up at the first sound of disturbance.

Thus they were sitting, silent and motionless, when the door was pushed open, and Tony stood in the doorway. At the sight of him Millie uttered one loud scream, and clapped her hands over her face. Callon, on the other hand, started up on to his feet. As

he did so he upset his wine-glass over the table-cloth; it fell and splintered on the polished floor. He turned towards the intruder who so roughly forced his way into the room. The eyes of that intruder took no account of him; they were fixed upon Millie Stretton, as she sat cowering at the table with her hands before her face.

'What do you want?' cried Callon. 'You have no right here!'

'I have every right here,' said Tony. 'That is my wife!'

It was still his wife at whom he looked, not at all towards Callon. Callon was startled out of his wits. Detection he had always feared; he had sought to guard against it by the use of every precaution known to his devious strategy. But it was detection by Pamela Mardale and her friends, who had once already laid him by the heels; the husband had never entered into his calculations. He had accepted without question Millie's version of the husband—he was the man who did not care. In some part of the world he wandered, but where no one knew; cut off from all his friends—indifferent, neglectful, and a fool. Even now he could not believe. This might be some new trick of Pamela Mardale's.

'Your wife!' he exclaimed. 'That is not true.'

'Not true?' cried Tony, in a terrible voice. He stretched out his arm and pointed towards Millie. 'Look!'

Millie flinched as though she feared a blow. She dropped her head yet lower. She held her fingers over her eyelids, closing them tightly. She had looked once at Tony's face, she dared not look again. She sat in darkness, trembling. One question was in her mind. 'Would he kill her?' Callon looked at her as he was bidden. Millie was wont to speak of her husband with indifference, and a suggestion of scorn. Yet it was her manifest terror which now convinced Callon that the husband was indeed before him. Here the man was, sprung suddenly out of the dark upon him, not neglectful, for he had the look of one who has travelled from afar very quickly, and slept but little on the way; not indifferent, for he was white with anger and his eyes were aflame. Callon cursed the luck which had for a second time brought him into such ill straits. He measured himself with Tony, and knew in the instant that he was no match for him. There was a man, tired, no doubt, and worn, but hard as iron, supple of muscle and limb, and finely trained to the last superfluous ounce of flesh; while

he himself was soft with luxury and good living. He sought to temporise.

‘That is no proof,’ said he. ‘Any woman might be startled —’ And Tony broke fiercely in upon his stammered argument: ‘Go out,’ he cried, ‘and wait for me!’

The door was still open. Outside it in the passage the waiters were clustered, listening. Inside the room Millie was listening. The order, roughly given, was just one which Callon for very shame could not obey. He would have liked to obey it, for confronting husbands was never to his liking; all his art lay in eluding them.

‘Go out!’ Tony repeated, and took a step forward. Callon could not cut so poor a figure as to slink from the room like a whipped schoolboy. Yet it would have gone better with him had he eaten his leek and gone.

‘It would not be safe to leave you,’ he babbled. And suddenly Tony caught him by the throat, struck him upon the face, and then flung him violently away.

Callon reeled back through the open windows, slipped and fell at his full length upon the terrace. His head struck the stone flags with a horrible sound. He lay quite still in the strong light which poured from the room; his eyes were closed, his face quite bloodless. It was his business, as Mudge had said, to fight amongst the tea-cups.

Tony made no further movement towards him. The waiters went out on to the terrace and lifted him up and carried him away. Then Tony turned towards his wife. She had risen up from her chair and overturned it when Tony had flung the interloper from the room. She now crouched shuddering against the wall, with her eyes fixed in terror upon her husband. As he turned towards her she uttered a sob and dropped upon her knees before him. That was the end of all her scorn. She kneeled in deadly fear, admiring him in the very frenzy of her fear. She had no memory for the contemptuous letters which she had written and Tony had carried under his pillow on the North Sea. Her little deceits and plots and trickeries to hoodwink her friends, her little pretence of passion for Lionel Callon—she knew at this moment that it never had been more than a pretence—these were the matters which now she remembered, and for which she dreaded punishment. She was wearing jewels that night—jewels which Tony had given her in the good past days when they lived together in the house in Deanery Street. They shook and glittered upon her hair, about her neck,

upon her bosom and her arms. She kneeled in her delicate finery of lace and satin in this room of luxury and bright flowers. There was no need for Tony now to work to re-establish himself in her thoughts. She reached out her hands to him in supplication.

'I am not guilty,' she moaned. 'Tony! Tony!'

CHAPTER XXXII.

HUSBAND AND WIFE.

THE man who was no good had his triumph then. Only triumph was not at all in his thoughts.

'Oh, please!' he said very quietly, 'Get up from your knees. I don't like to see you there. It hurts me.'

Millie raised her eyes to him in wonder. He did not mean to kill her, then. All his violence, it seemed, was reserved for that poor warrior of the drawing-rooms who had just been carried away stunned and bleeding from the terrace. When Tony spoke to her his voice was rather that of a man very dispirited and sad. He had indeed travelled through the mountains of Morocco hot with anger against Callon the interloper, but now that he had come face to face again with Millie, now that he had heard her voice with its remembered accents, the interloper seemed of little account, a creature to punish and be done with. The sadness of his voice penetrated to Millie's heart. She rose and stood submissively before him.

In the passage outside the door the waiters were clustered whispering together. Tony closed the door and shut the whispers out. Upon the terrace, outside the window, a man was hesitating whether to enter or no. Tony went to the window.

'Who are you?' he asked. 'What do you want?'

'I am Giraud, the schoolmaster of Roquebrune,' said the man, timidly. 'I bring a letter from Mademoiselle Mardale.'

'Let me see it!' said Tony; and he held out his hand for the letter. He glanced at the superscription and gave it back. 'It is not for me,' he said, and M. Giraud went away from the terrace. Tony turned back to his wife. His mind was full of a comparison between the ways in which he and she had each spent the years of absence. For him they had been years of endeavour, persisted in through failure and perplexity until success, but for her, was reached.

And how had Millie spent them? He looked at her sternly, and she said again in a faltering voice:

‘I am innocent, Tony.’

And he replied:

‘Could you have said as much to-morrow had I not come back to-night?’

Millie had no answer to that question—she attempted none; and it was even at that moment counted to her credit by her husband. She stood silent for a while, and only the murmur of the sea breaking upon the beach filled the room. A light wind breathed through the open window, cool and fragrant, and made the shaded candles flicker upon the table. Millie had her one poor excuse to offer, and she pleaded it humbly.

‘I thought that you had ceased to care what became of me,’ she said.

Tony looked sharply at her. She was sincere—surely she was sincere.

‘You thought that?’ he exclaimed; and he replaced her chair at the table. ‘Sit down here! Let me understand! You thought that I had ceased to care for you? When I ceased to write, I suppose?’

Millie shook her head.

‘Before that?’

Tony dropped into the chair on which Callon had been sitting.

‘Before that?’ he exclaimed in perplexity. ‘When? Tell me!’

Millie sat over against him at the table.

‘Do you remember the evening when you first told me that you had made up your mind to go away and make a home for both of us? It was on that evening. You gave your reason for going away. We had begun to quarrel—we were drifting apart.’

‘I remember,’ said Tony; ‘but we had not ceased to care then, neither you nor I. It was just because I feared that at some time we might cease to care that I was resolved to go away.’

‘Ah,’ said Millie; ‘but already the change had begun. Yes, yes! Things which you thought you never could remember without a thrill you remembered already with indifference—you remembered them without being any longer moved or touched by the associations which they once had had. I recollect the very words you used. I sat as still as could be while you spoke them; but I never forgot them, Tony. There was a particular instance

which you mentioned—a song——’ And suddenly Tony laughed; but he laughed harshly, and there was no look of amusement on his face. Millie stared at him in surprise, but he did not explain, and she went on with her argument.

‘So, when you ceased to write I was still more convinced that you had ceased to care. When you remained away after your father had died I was yet more sure.’

Tony leaned across the white table-cloth with its glittering silver, and fixed his eyes on her.

‘I will tell you why I ceased to write. Every letter which you wrote to me when I was in New York was more contemptuous than the letter which had preceded it. I had failed, and you despised me for my failure. I had allowed myself to be tricked out of your money——’ And upon that Millie interrupted him;

‘Oh, no!’ she cried; ‘you must not say that I despised you for that. No! That is not fair. I never thought of the money. I offered you what was left.’

Tony had put himself in the wrong here. He recognised his mistake, he accepted Millie’s correction.

‘Yes, that is true,’ he said; ‘you offered me all that was left—but you offered it contemptuously; you had no shadow of belief that I would use it to advantage—you had no faith in me at all. In your eyes I was no good. Mind, I don’t blame you. You were justified, no doubt. I had set out to make a home for you, as many a man has done for his wife. Only where they had succeeded I had failed. If I thought anything at all——’ he said, with an air of hesitation.

‘Well?’ asked Millie.

‘I thought you might have expressed your contempt with a little less of unkindness, or perhaps have hidden it altogether. You see, I was not having an easy time in New York, and your letters made it very much harder.’

‘Oh, Tony,’ she said, in a low voice of self-reproach. She was sitting with her hands clenched in front of her upon the table-cloth, her forehead puckered, and in her eyes a look of great pain.

‘Never mind that,’ he replied; and he resumed his story. ‘I saw then quite clearly that with each letter which you received from me, each new instalment of my record of failure—for each letter was just that, wasn’t it?—your contempt grew. I was determined that if I could help it your contempt should not embitter all our two lives. So I ceased to write. For the same reason I stayed away,

even after my father had died. Had I come back then I should have come back a failure, proved and self-confessed. And your scorn would have stayed with you. My business henceforth was to destroy it, to prove to you that after all I was some good—if not at money-making, at something else. I resolved that we should not live together again until I could come to you and say: "You have no right to despise me. Here's the proof."

Millie was learning now, even as Tony had learnt a minute ago. All that he said to her was utterly surprising and strange. He had been thinking of her, then, all the time while he was away! Indifference was in no way the reason of his absence.

'Oh, why did you not write this to me?' she cried. 'It need not have been a long letter, since you were unwilling to write. But just this you might have written. It would have been better, kinder'—and she paused upon the word, uttering it with hesitation and a shy deprecating smile, as though aware that she had no claim upon his kindness. 'It would have been kinder than just to leave me here, not knowing where you were, and thinking what I did.'

'It is true,' said Tony, 'I might have written. But would you have believed me if I had? No.'

'Then you might have come to me,' she urged. 'Once—just for five minutes—to tell me what you meant to do.'

'I might,' Tony agreed; 'in fact, I very nearly did. I was under the windows of the house in Berkeley Square one night.' And Millie started.

'Yes, you were,' she said slowly.

'You knew that?'

'Yes; I knew it the next day.' And she added: 'I wish now, I think, that you had come in that night.'

'Suppose that I had,' said Tony; 'suppose that I had told you of my fine plan, you would have had no faith in it. You would merely have thought: "Here's another folly to be added to the rest." Your contempt would have been increased, that's all.'

It was quite strange to Millie Stretton that there ever could have been a time when she had despised him. She saw him sitting now in front of her, quiet and stern; she remembered her own terror when he burst into the room, when he flung Callon headlong through the windows, when he turned at last towards her.

'We have been strangers to one another.'

'Yes,' he replied; 'I did not know you. I should never have

left you—now I understand that. I trusted you very blindly, but I did not know you.'

Millie lowered her eyes from his face.

'Nor I you,' she answered. 'What did you do when you went away that night from Berkeley Square?'

'I enlisted in the Foreign Legion in Algeria.'

Millie raised her head again with a start of surprise.

'Soldiering was my trade, you see. It was the one profession where I had just a little of that expert knowledge which is necessary nowadays if you are to make your living.'

Something of his life in the Foreign Legion Tony now told her. He spoke deliberately, since a light was beginning dimly to shine through the darkness of his perplexities. Of a set purpose he described to her the arduous perils of active service and the monotony of the cantonments. He was resolved that she should understand in the spirit and in the letter the life which for her sake he had led. He related his expedition to the Figuig oasis, his march into the Sahara under Tavernay. He took from his pocket the medals which he had won, and laid them upon the table-cloth before her.

'Look at them,' he said; 'I earned them. These are mine. I earned them for you; and while I was earning them what were you doing?'

Millie listened and looked. Wonder grew upon her. It was for her that he had laboured and endured and succeeded! His story was a revelation to her. Never had she dreamed that a man would so strive for any woman. She had lived so long among the little things of the world—the little emotions, the little passions, the little jealousies and rivalries, the little aims, the little methods of attaining them, that only with great difficulty could she realise a simpler and a wider life. She was overwhelmed now. Pride and humiliation fought within her—pride that Tony had so striven for her in silence and obscurity, humiliation because she had fallen so short of his example. It was her way to feel in superlatives at any crisis of her destiny, but surely she had a justification now.

'I never knew—I never thought! Oh, Tony!' she exclaimed, twisting her hands together as she sat before him.

'I became a sergeant,' he said. 'Then I brought back the remnants of the geographical expedition to Ouargla.' He taxed his memory for the vivid details of that terrible retreat. He compelled her to realise something of the dumb, implacable hostility of the

Sahara, to see, in the evening against the setting sun, the mounted figures of the Touaregs, and to understand that the day's march had not shaken them off. She seemed to be on the march herself, wondering whether she would live out the day, or, if she survived that, whether she would live out the night.

'But you succeeded!' she cried, clinging to the fact that they were both here in France, with the murmur of the Mediterranean in their ears. 'You came back.'

'Yes, I came back. One morning I marched my men through the gate of Ouargla—and what were you doing upon that day?'

Talking, perhaps, with Lionel Callon, in one of those unfrequented public places with which London abounds! Millie could not tell. She sat there and compared Lionel Callon with the man who was before her. Memories of the kind of talk she was wont to hold with Lionel Callon recurred to her, filling her with shame. She was glad to think that when Tony led his broken weary force through the gate of Ouargla Lionel Callon had not been with her—had indeed been far away in Chili. She suddenly placed her hands before her face and burst into tears.

'Oh, Tony,' she whispered, in an abasement of humiliation. 'Oh, Tony.'

'By that homeward march,' he went on, 'I gained my commission. That was what I aimed at all the while, and I had earned it at the last. Look!'

He took from his pocket the letter which his colonel had handed to him at Ain-Sefra. He had carefully treasured it all this while. He held it out to her and made her read.

'You see?' he said. 'A commission won from the ranks in the hardest service known to soldiers, won without advantage of name, or friends, or money. Won just by myself. That is what I strove for. If I could win that I could come back to you with a great pride. I should be no longer the man who was no good. You yourself might even be proud of me. I used to dream of that—to dream of something else.'

His voice softened a little, and a smile for a moment relaxed the severity of his face.

'Of what?' she asked.

'Out there among the sand hills, under the stars at night, I used to dream that we might perhaps get hold again of the little house in Deanery Street, where we were so happy together once. We might pretend almost that we had lived there all the time.'

He spoke in a voice of great longing, and Millie was touched to the heart. She looked at Tony through her tears. There was a great longing astir within her at this moment. Was that little house in Deanery Street still a possibility? She did not presume to hope so much; but she wished that she could have hoped. She pressed the letter which she held against her breast; she would have loved to have held it to her lips, but that again she did not dare to do.

'At all events you did succeed,' she said; 'I shall be glad to know that. I shall always be glad—whatever happens now.'

'But I did not succeed,' Tony replied. 'I earned the commission, yes!—I never held it. That letter was given to me one Monday by my colonel at Ain-Sefra. You mentioned a song a minute ago, do you remember? . . . I had lost the associations of that song. I laughed when you mentioned it, and you were surprised. I laughed because when I received that letter I took it away with me, and that song, with all that it had ever meant, came back to my mind. I lay beneath the palm trees, and I looked across the water past the islands and I saw the lights of the yachts in Oban Bay. I was on the dark lawn again, high above the sea, the lighted windows of the house were behind me. I heard your voice. Oh, I had got you altogether back that day,' he exclaimed with a cry. 'It was as though I held your hands and looked into your eyes. I went back towards the barracks to write to you, and as I went someone tapped me on the shoulder and brought me news of you to wake me out of my dreams.'

Just for a moment Millie wondered who it was who had brought the news; but the next words which Tony spoke drove the question from her mind.

'A few more weeks and I should have held that commission. I might have left the Legion, leaving behind me many friends and an honoured name. As it was I had to desert—I deserted that night.'

He spoke quite simply; but, nevertheless, the words fell with a shock upon Millie. She uttered a low cry: 'Oh, Tony!' she said.

'Yes,' he said, with a nod of the head, 'I incurred that disgrace. I shall be ashamed of it all my life. Had I been caught it might have meant an ignoble death; in any case it would have meant years of prison—and I should have deserved those years of prison.'

Millie shut her eyes in horror. Everything else that he had

told her, every other incident—his sufferings, his perils—all seemed of little account beside this crowning risk, this crowning act of sacrifice. It was not merely that he had risked a shameful death or a shameful imprisonment. Millie was well aware that his whole nature and character must be in revolt against the act itself. Desertion! It implied disloyalty, untruth, deceit, cowardice—just those qualities, indeed, which she knew Tony most to hate, which perhaps she had rather despised him for hating. No man would have been more severe in the punishment of a deserter than Tony himself. Yet he had deserted, and upon her account. And he sat there telling her of it quietly, as though it were the most insignificant action in the world. He might have escaped the consequences—he would certainly not have escaped the shame.

But Millie's cup of remorse was not yet full.

'Yet I cannot see that I could do anything else. To-night proves to me that I was right, I think. I have come very quickly, yet I am only just in time.' There was a long stain of wine upon the table-cloth beneath his eyes. There Callon had upset his glass upon Tony's entrance.

'Yes, it was time that I returned,' he continued. 'One way or another a burden of disgrace had to be borne—if I stayed, just as certainly as if I came away; I saw that quite clearly. So I came away.' He forbore to say that now the disgrace fell only upon his shoulders, that she was saved from it. But Millie understood, and in her heart she thanked him for his forbearance. 'But it was hard on me, I think,' he said. 'You see, even now I am on French soil, and subject to French laws.'

And Millie, upon that, started up in alarm.

'What do you mean?' she asked breathlessly.

'There has been a disturbance here to-night, has there not? Suppose that the manager of this restaurant has sent for a *gendarme*!'

With a swift movement Millie gathered up the medals and held them close in her clenched hands.

'Oh, it does not need those to convict me; my name would be enough. Let my name appear and there's a deserter from the Foreign Legion laid by the heels in France. All the time we have been talking here I have sat expecting that door to open behind me.'

Millie caught up a lace wrap which lay upon a sofa. She had the look of a hunted creature. She spoke quickly and feverishly, in a whisper.

'Oh, why did not you say this at once? Let us go!'

Tony sat stubbornly in his chair.

'No,' said he, with his eyes fixed upon her. 'I have given you an account of how I have spent the years during which we have been apart. Can you do the same?'

He waited for her answer in suspense. To this question all his words had been steadily leading; for this reason he had dwelt upon his own career. Would she, stung by her remorse, lay before him truthfully and without reserve the story of her years? If she did, why, that dim light which shone amidst the darkness of his perplexities might perhaps shine a little brighter. He uttered his question. Millie bowed her head, and answered:

'I will.'

'Sit down, then, and tell me now.'

'Oh, no,' she exclaimed; 'not here! It is not safe. As we go back to Eze I will tell you everything.'

A look of relief came upon Tony's face. He rose and touched the bell.

A waiter appeared.

'I will pay the bill,' he said.

The waiter brought the bill and Tony discharged it.

'The gentleman—M. Callon,' the waiter said. 'A doctor has been. He has a concussion. It will be a little time before he is able to be moved.'

'Indeed?' said Tony with indifference. He walked with his wife out of the little gaily lighted room into the big, silent restaurant. A single light faintly illuminated it. They crossed it to the door and went up the winding drive on to the road. The night was dry and clear and warm. There was no moon. They walked in the pure twilight of the stars round the gorge towards Eze.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

MILLIE'S STORY.

THEY walked for a while in silence, side by side, yet not so close but that there was an interval between them. Millie every now and then glanced at Tony's face, but she saw only his profile, and with only the glimmer of the starlight to serve her for a reading-lamp she could guess nothing of his expression. But he walked like a man utterly dispirited and tired. The hopes, so stoutly cherished during the last few years, had all crumbled away to-night. Perpetually his thoughts recurred to that question, which now never could be answered—if he had gone into the house in Berkeley Square on that distant evening when he had been contented to pace for a little while beneath the windows, would he have averted the trouble which had reached its crisis to-night at the *Réserve*? He thought not—he was not sure; only he was certain that he should have gone in. He stopped and turned back, looking towards the *Réserve*. A semi-circle of lights over the doorway was visible, and as he looked those lights were suddenly extinguished. He heard Millie's voice at his side.

'I will tell you now how the time has passed with me.' And he saw that she was looking steadfastly into his eyes. 'The story will sound very trivial, very contemptible, after what you have told me. It fills me utterly with shame. But I should have told you it none the less had you not asked for it—I rather wish that you had not asked for it; for I think I must have told you of my own accord.'

She spoke in a quick, troubled voice, but it did not waver; nor did her eyes once fall from his. The change in her was swift no doubt. But down there in the *Réserve*, where the lights were out, and the sea echoed through empty rooms, she had had stern and savage teachers. Terror, humiliation, and the spectacle of violence had torn away a veil from before her eyes. She saw her own life in its true perspective. And, that she might see it the more clearly and understand, she had the story of another life wherewith to compare it. It is a quality of big performances, whether in art or life, that while they surprise when first apprehended, they appear upon thought to be so simple that it is astonishing surprise was ever felt. Something of that quality Tony's career possessed. It had come upon Millie as a revelation, yet, now she was thinking:

'Yes, that is what Tony would do. How is it I never guessed?' She put him side by side with that other man, the warrior of the drawing-rooms, and she was filled with shame that ever she could have preferred the latter even for a moment of madness.

They walked slowly on again. Millie drew her lace wrap more closely about her throat.

'Are you cold?' asked Tony. 'You are lightly clothed to be talking here. We had better perhaps walk on, and keep what you have to tell me until to-morrow.'

'No,' she answered quickly, 'I am not cold. And I must tell you what I have to tell you to-night. I want all this bad, foolish part of my life to end to-night, to be extinguished just as those lights were extinguished a minute since. Only there is something I should like to say to you first.' Millie's voice wavered now and broke. 'If we do not walk along the road together any more,' she went on timidly, 'I shall still be glad that you came back to-night. I do not know that you will believe that—I do not, indeed, see why you should; but I should very much like you to believe it; for it is the truth. I have learned a good deal, I think, during the last three hours. I would rather go on alone—if it is to be so—in this dim clean starlight, than ever be back again in the little room with its lights and flowers. Do you understand me?'

'I think so,' said Tony.

'At all events, the road is visible ahead,' she went on. 'One sees it glimmering, one can keep between the banks; while, in the little lighted room it is easy to get lost.'

And thus to Millie now, as to Pamela when she rode back from her last interview with Warrisdén at the village of the three poplars, the riband of white road stretching away in the dusk became a parable.

'Yes,' said Tony, 'perhaps my path was really the easier one to follow. It was direct and plain.'

'Ah,' said Millie, 'it only seems so because you have traversed it, and are looking back. I do not think it was so simple and direct while you walked upon it.' And Tony, remembering the doubts and perplexities which had besieged him, could not but assent.

'I do not think, too, that it was so easy to discover at the beginning.'

There rose before Tony's eyes the picture of a ketch-rigged boat sailing at night over a calm sea. A man leaned over the bulwarks,

and the bright glare from a lightship ran across the waves and flashed upon his face. Tony remembered the moment very clearly when he had first hit upon his plan; he remembered the weeks of anxiety of which it was the outcome. No, the road had not been easy to find at the beginning. He was silent for a minute, and then he said gently:

‘I am sorry that I asked you to tell your story—I am sorry that I did not leave the decision to you. But it shall be as though you told it of your own accord.’

The sentence was a concession, no less in the manner of its utterance than in the words themselves. Millie took heart, and told him the whole story of her dealings with Lionel Callon, without excuses and without concealments.

‘I seemed to mean so much to him, so little to you,’ she said. ‘You see, I did not understand you at all. You were away, too, and he was near. I do not defend myself.’

She did not spare herself, she taxed her memory for the details of her days; and as she spoke the story seemed more utterly contemptible and small than even she in her abasement had imagined it would be. But she struggled through with it to the end.

‘That night when you stood beneath the windows in Berkeley Square,’ she said, ‘he was with me. He ran in from Lady Millingham’s party and talked with me for half an hour. Yes, at the very time when you were standing on the pavement he was within the house. I know, for you were seen, and on the next day I was told of your presence. I was afraid then. The news was a shock to me. I thought “Suppose you had come in!”’

‘But, back there, in the room,’ Tony interrupted, ‘you told me that you wished I had come in.’

‘Yes,’ she answered. ‘And it is quite true; I wish now that you had come in.’

She told him of the drive round Regent’s Park, and of the consent she gave that night to Lionel Callon.

‘I think you know everything now,’ she said. ‘I have tried to forget nothing. I want you, whatever you decide to do, to decide knowing everything.’

‘Thank you,’ said Tony simply. And she added:

‘I am not the first woman I know who has thrown away the substance for the shadow.’

Upon the rest of that walk little was said. They went forward beneath the stars. A great peace lay upon sea and land. The

hills rose dark and high upon their left hand, the sea murmured and whispered to them upon the right. Millie walked even more slowly as they neared the hotel at Eze, and Tony turned to her with a question :

‘You are tired ?’

‘No,’ she answered.

She was thinking that very likely she would never walk again on any road with Tony at her side, and she was minded to prolong this last walk to the last possible moment. For in this one night Tony had reconquered her. It was not merely that his story had filled her with amazement and pride ; but she had seen him that night strong and dominant, as she had never dreamed of seeing him. She loved his very sternness towards herself. Not once had he spoken her name and called her ‘Millie.’ She had watched for that and longed for it, and yet because he had not used it she was the nearer to worship. Once she said to him with a start of anxiety :

‘You are not staying here under your own name ?’

‘No,’ he replied. ‘A friend has taken rooms in Monte Carlo for both of us. Only his name has been given.’

‘And you will leave France to-morrow ?’

‘Yes.’

‘Promise !’ she cried.

Tony promised, with a look of curiosity at his wife. Why should she be so eager for his safety ? He did not understand. He was wondering what he must do in this crisis of their lives. Was he to come, in spite of all his efforts, to that ordinary compromise which it had been his object to avoid ?

They reached the door of the hotel and there Tony halted.

‘Good-night !’ he said ; he did not hold out his hand. He stood confronting Millie with the light from the hall lamp falling full upon his face. Millie hoped that he would say something more—just a little word of kindness or forgiveness—if only she waited long enough without answering him ; and she was willing to wait until the morning came. He did indeed speak again, and then Millie was sorry that she had waited. For he said the one really cruel thing amongst all the words he had said that night. He was not aware of its cruelty, he was only conscious of its truth.

‘Do you know,’ he said—and upon his tired face there came a momentary smile—‘to-night I miss the Legion very much.’ Again he said ‘Good-night.’

This time Millie answered him ; and in an instant he was gone.

She could have cried out ; she could hardly restrain her voice from calling him back to her. ' Was this the end ? ' she asked of herself. ' That one cruel sentence and then the commonplace Good-night, without so much as a touch of the hands. Was this the very end ? ' A sharp fear stabbed her. For a few moments she heard Tony's footsteps upon the flags in front of the hotel, and then for a few moments upon the gravel of the garden path ; and after that she heard only the murmur of the sea. And all at once for her the world was empty. ' Was this the end ? ' she asked herself again most piteously ; ' this, which might have been the beginning.' Slowly she went up to her rooms. Sleep did not visit her that night.

(To be concluded.)

VISITS TO PARIS AFTER THE GREAT WAR.

THE dilettante has no longer a niche left him in our civilisation of to-day. A generation, however, which worships Dumas, and has been brought up on Stevenson, may fondly imagine that one art yet remains open to the merest amateur; but it is not so. *L'art de conspirer* is still a fine art, needing special aptitudes and talents, exacting a long apprenticeship before the smallest success can be won, as I shall hope to make good in the following story.

After the war of 1870-71 English men and women had been reluctantly obliged to give up visits to France. The outbreak of the Commune, the political unrest, and the angry feeling that ensued had frightened the timid, and had made travellers generally consider whether France was a happy place in which to make holiday. From Paris in particular visitors had kept away. In 187—, however, we accepted a pressing invitation from English friends who had their home in France, and were at that time living in Paris. We crossed the Channel on a wild, stormy day in September, and I remember well that the service was late, and that as we clattered up the paved street in the old *quartier* where our friends lived we were thoroughly weary, and had no wish but to go to bed. Our hostess lit a candle and prepared to show us our rooms; but the host, after looking into the passage and carefully shutting the door, said that he had something to say first. 'I want you to promise,' he said to me, 'not to pull out, or attempt to open, a wooden case which is under your bed. The servants and the *concierge* have no notion what is inside, but believe it to be something from our English home which we have not found a place for.'

'But tell me, I beg of you,' I began.

'This is the story,' said he. 'You know that the Vendôme Column was pulled down in the recent disturbances. The shattered pieces lay along and across the roadway on mattresses which had been spread to receive them. The little figure that had stood in the outstretched hand of Napoleon lay amongst the *débris* uninjured. It disappeared. Now you must know that that little figure is a fetich to the French people—"Mademoiselle Victoire" they call her—and when the regular Government got possession of Paris and

began to collect the scattered pieces of the column in order to re-erect it, a great clamour was made and an elaborate search instituted for *Mademoiselle Victoire*; but she has never been found. *Mademoiselle Victoire* is under your bed; and I must impress upon you that if it were to be known that she were here, it would certainly cost the life of someone; indeed, we might all be shot. This is how I came to have possession of her. A young workman whom I know well, and for whom I have the greatest respect, was present among the crowd when the column was pulled down. The Victory rolled on the ground at his feet. He swore to himself that that symbol of war and of the aggression of the Napoleonic régime should never be raised on high again as an image to be worshipped; so, with a sort of superstitious feeling that he was helping to *scotch* an evil thing that might yet work mischief to France, he carried home the figure and hid it. It is about two feet six inches in height. When, however, the search for "*Mademoiselle Victoire*" began, it became a matter of life and death for him to conceal it any longer in his poor lodging, and he brought it to me one night and begged me to keep it and promise never to give it back. I hate the Second Empire and all that it represents as much as my friend the workman,' said our host, 'and so I have kept the Victory; but 'tis a guest that might bring us death, so swear never, &c., &c.' And we swore.

That night I dreamed an endless dream, as it seemed, of a long series of dangers and disasters, and when in the early morning the market carts came rattling in over the stones of the old street, I woke to fancy that I heard the tramp of soldiers on the stairs and the grounding of arms outside my door. I jumped up and listened, and my first act in the peaceful daylight was to take a good look at the sarcophagus in which '*Mademoiselle Victoire*' reposed. It was a wooden packing-case, nailed down, with an English address on a card fastened to it.

It may be well here to tell the end of the story. Our host was most anxious to be rid of his dangerous visitor. Paris was still full of strange rumours, and the demon of suspicion walked abroad. There was talk of getting the Victory to England, but it was felt that the Victory belonged to French history, and could not be moved from French soil. I remember the late Lord Houghton's delight when we told him the story. What a triumph it would be to put the Victory up in his hall, said he. For many years I heard no trustworthy account of her ultimate fate. I had been told

that on a dark night a *fiacre* was called, the case put inside, and driven to the river, where two men hired a boat, and, rowing downstream, lowered it into the Seine. But the true story is thus. Our English friends left Paris, and before leaving were greatly troubled as to how to dispose of the Victory. An old lady, a staunch Republican, offered to take it. She felt that she would be doing her country a service to keep it out of the way. But her sweet and beneficent life had not prepared her for such a troublesome guest. It got upon her nerves; she found herself always thinking of it; and at last she persuaded a friend to relieve her of the responsibility. He, in a flippant spirit, painted the poor Victory white. He described to me how odd she looked, and shorn of her glory, and how like a malefactor he felt when he had reduced her to the level of a plaster cast. He tried many plans of concealment, and at last wedged her tight into a disused chimney. But after a while he, too, found the part too onerous to sustain. He would wake in the night at some chance noise to fancy that she had fallen down the chimney and was being picked up by the *concierge*. 'Elle m'obsédait,' said he, 'à un tel point' that one day he determined to have done with her for ever; so, years after the day on which we found her in our friend's house, he carried her to a deserted open space outside Paris and laid her carefully down upon a heap of rubbish. I have always felt that the Victory imposed her personality very strongly upon those who had charge of her.

The authorities, I need not say, very soon discovered her, divested her of her coating of white paint, and replaced her on the Colonne Vendôme, where once more she presides over the destinies of France.

'Je n'étais pas fait pour être conspirateur,' said my friend.

Readers of French novels may have read a book lately published in which the adventures of 'Mademoiselle Victoire' are set forth, but the adventures are fictitious. The story I have told is history, and I think it proves my point that conspiracy is a fine art.

We left our friend's house at the end of a week to go to an hotel, and then, for the first time, I made some acquaintance with old Paris—the Paris which to-day has been improved away. It was our great privilege to have as cicerone M. Pierre Laffitte. It would be impossible to convey to those who never knew him his charm of conversation, the wit, humour, learning, and sympathy which made his society so delightful and informing. I may say

here that he was an intimate of M. Anatole France, who in one of the sages of 'l'Orme du Mail' has drawn a delicate picture of our friend. M. Laffitte, then, was our guide.

'La journée sera dure, mais elle finira,' said he, laughingly, as we started out. He took us up narrow paved streets where no carriage could pass, and where the people sat in the streets at their trades. At a certain place he would always pause, and, taking off his hat, murmur, 'C'est la terre sacrée de la Révolution,' and then he would show the Rue Servandoni, where the great Condorcet lay hid, and where he wrote his famous treatise, 'On the Progress of the Human Mind,' whilst the Mountain was hunting him to death.

We saw the Rue de Fouarre, where rumour has it that Dante lived when, as a student, he came to work in Paris. He bade us observe how the great rose window of Notre Dame, which was in Dante's time the marvel of architecture, showed clear above the low houses, and how one might be permitted to imagine that it was here that the poet was inspired with the idea of the mystic rose of the Trinity in the 'Paradiso.' We wandered round the Sorbonne in the haunts of the students, and saw the little old gabled house in which Marat was killed by Charlotte Corday.

I cannot rehearse all that we saw on that memorable day. I only know that we were quite wearied out as we turned our steps to his flat in the Rue d'Assas, he entertaining us all the way with a dissertation on the philosophy of courage in the abstract, and courage *en face de l'obus*. As we neared home he suddenly stopped. 'Ah! here lay poor Jules in his blood for a day and a night, and none dared approach him. He was the baker's lad, and brought me my rolls every morning; but he fought on a barricade, or was supposed to have fought, so they put him up against the wall, and shot him then and there. He was a good lad, the only support of his mother. Those are memories that sink deep. He had a generous heart, poor Jules!'

Perhaps I may be allowed here to tell a tale which Mr. Charles Austin told me of a scene he witnessed when the Versaillais entered Paris. The tale has been told in a poem by Victor Hugo. This is Mr. Charles Austin's prose version. He saw, one day roaming about Paris—a not uncommon sight—a group of men and women put against a wall to be shot. Their hands were supposed to be blackened with powder. Amongst them was a lad of twelve or fourteen who, before the order to shoot could be given, stepped forward and begged to be allowed to take back the watch his

mother had lent him. He produced a huge turnip of a watch and promised faithfully to return. Mr. Austin said it was a moment of anguish. None could be sure that the child was telling the truth; but the officer commanding, giving him a kick, said: 'Va-t'en au diable!' The child ran off, the order to shoot rang out, but the horrid business was hardly over before the clatter of feet was heard, the boy reappeared round a corner, and, putting himself against the wall, prepared for death. It was impossible to kill that heroic little soul. 'It renews one's faith in human nature,' said Mr. Austin.

But there were other things in Paris besides these dregs of revolution. M. Turgenev was there, and it was to be our privilege to make his acquaintance. In those days Turgenev was not the accepted classic that he has since become. I had learnt to know and appreciate him from G. H. Lewes and G. Eliot, who had a veritable culte for the great Russian, and our old friend, M. Kovalevski, had promised to procure for me the pleasure of a visit from him. So we waited in our modest apartment, very high up, I am afraid, in a Paris hotel, for the arrival of the great man. Punctual to a moment almost he came, and, sitting down, he said, in his perfect eighteenth-century French: 'Well, *mes amis*, Kovalevski tells me that you read my books, and would like to see me. Here I am; now what shall we talk about?'

I have seen many distinguished men, politicians, warriors, writers, poets, artists, but I never saw any man who was so completely the hero. Well over six feet in height, with long limbs and spare frame, clad in a loose coat, he carried himself with an ease and dignity that impressed you as of one of the natural lords of creation. His head was that of the Olympian Jove, crowned with thick locks as white as snow. Very dark eyes under thick, overhanging brows flashed a thousand meanings at you as he spoke. His voice was full and musical, his manner simple without pose, though at that time he was the darling of the French *salons*. A fine, noble nature one felt, with a passionate sympathy for the people, and along with the artist's perception of the beautiful, the look of one who had seen and suffered much.

He said that we had a long afternoon before us, and could have a real 'conversation.' Were we interested in the social question in Russia? Wouldn't we like to ask questions? And he himself began the questions by inquiring which of his books we had read, and which we liked best. I said, 'Récits d'un Chasseur

Russe' and 'Elena,' in the English translation 'On the Eve.' He then told us the whole story of how the 'Récits' had come to be written, and of the consequences the book had entailed upon him. He gave us a wonderful account, too, of his reception by the students, men and women, at the University of Moscow, and of the touching welcome they had given him. He said that I was right, a thousand times right, to put 'Elena' first. He considered it to be the best and truest of his novels. And so we talked and talked of the state of Russia, of the barbarous treatment of the Communards in Paris, and many other things, till the evening drew on and he had to rush away to dinner. He promised to come to stay with us in England, but added, somewhat sorrowfully: 'When a man makes his home in another man's nest he is not always able to do as he would like. But my parcel,' said he; 'I have dropped it; it is the *souliers de satin de ces demoiselles*.' So we parted, already old friends, never, alas! to meet again.

The next summer found us established at Fontainebleau. It was a time of grave political unrest. The fate of the Republic seemed to hang in the balance, and men spoke of nothing but the various pretenders, of revolution, and of civil war. Gambetta had just made his great speech, of which one sentence had rung through the country. He summoned the discredited Government *ou se soumettre ou se démettre*. A general election was imminent, and the air was charged with a dangerous electricity. Our first instinct on arrival was to provide ourselves with newspapers, but we found that the newsvendor in the town would not, dared not in fact, supply any Republican paper. The 'Débats,' the 'République Française'—Gambetta's organ—the 'Temps,' and many other respectable journals could not be bought anywhere, but the friends in whose house we were to live had arranged that a supply should be sent us daily from Paris in a paper parcel. There were six copies of, I think, the 'République Française,' which we were to give away quietly to people who otherwise would not have seen a Republican paper. One was for the gardener, a fine old peasant and most worthy citizen; another for a *garde champêtre*, a third for the laundress. All six papers had to be secretly given away. It was a strange state of things that under a republican government people in the country were afraid to sell republican prints of the greatest respectability.

We have all heard the story of how there were people living in England who had never heard the name of Queen Victoria, but

I had never before realised how difficult it is to make every voter in a country acquainted with the mere names of different political leaders. For whom and for what were these poor country folk going to vote at the coming election? Here the importance of Gambetta's military campaign became evident. That campaign had saved the self-respect of France, and Gambetta's name was, at all events, known in every cottage. 'Eh, que voulez-vous? Nous avons toujours Gambetta,' said our *cocher* one day when we were trying to talk politics. But what could the uneducated voter make of the names of the different candidates for power—the Empress Eugénie, the Prince Imperial, the Duc d'Aumale, the Comte de Paris, Thiers, MacMahon, Gambetta?

But one day a bombshell fell in our midst. Even Marshal MacMahon's newspapers had to announce the death of M. Thiers, 'le Libérateur du Territoire'—yes, and the man who was credited with the suppression of the rebellion of the Commune with needless brutality. The death came at last unexpectedly, and the event was felt by everyone to be a serious catastrophe. None could say what would happen. Would there be a public funeral? Could there be a private funeral? What would the Marshal do? What did the family wish? Was it possible that a procession could pass through the streets of Paris without disturbance? And, in the agitated condition of public feeling, where would that end? To what might it not lead?

Everyone in Fontainebleau was disturbed, and in letters that came to us from Paris grave anxiety was expressed. The English newspapers also predicted an outbreak. Happily we had been going to Paris, and the news reached us at the railway station. We determined to see the funeral, cost what it might, and to take counsel with our Parisian friends. It is the custom of French Positivists to meet together on September 5 at the house where Auguste Comte lived and died, 10 Monsieur le Prince, and, after a commemorative discourse, to dine together at the Café Voltaire or some other restaurant in old Paris. These 'banquets' are necessarily large, and the price of the dinner is a low one that working men and their wives may attend. The 'banquet' promised that night to be more than usually interesting. We sat down nearly one hundred persons. I found myself next to a very pleasant young man, who might have been the *attaché* to an embassy. On the other side of him was a lady, a stranger to me, as was the young man. By-and-by the two began talking of the real art of making

coffee, and I found that they differed quite seriously. 'Well, but,' said I, 'madame must surely know more than you about the making of coffee, because she constantly has to make it, whereas you, I suppose, seldom do.' 'Pardon, madame,' he answered with a bow, 'je suis cuisinier de mon état,' and he went on to explain that he had just been admitted to the Circle of the Cooks of Paris, a very select body, famous, as I afterwards learnt, not only for their standard of cooking, but also for their political sagacity.

I may mention here that, though my husband has been made honorary member of learned foreign societies, there is no diploma which he values more than that which makes him member of the Cuisiniers de Paris. I found my young cook most pleasant, well informed, and unassuming. We talked of the situation during dinner, as may be supposed. After the speeches were over, and we had drunk in silence, all standing, the toast of 'Les Morts,' the company broke up, and now was our opportunity to get information on the subject of the funeral. Happily our old friend, M. Magnin, was present. An aged workman who had seen many political crises, engineer, mathematician, and man of science, he had been the trusted personal friend of Auguste Comte.

He said: 'There will be no disturbance. The people of Paris are too sagacious to play into the hands of MacMahon and his pretender. We respect M. Thiers because he freed France of the foreigner. That was a great and distinguished service, and Frenchmen do not forget it; but,' he continued, 'there will be no enthusiasm. We shall all be there; all Paris will be in the streets as a mark of respect; but we do not forget the brutalities of the Versailles. He was responsible. Trust me, there will be no enthusiasm.'

'Well, but,' said we, 'that is a *nuance*, a delicate *nuance*. How can you be sure that your people will appreciate it, or will be able to act on it as a great public demonstration? See what the newspapers say!'

'The newspapers know nothing,' he replied; 'but I tell you, with absolute confidence, that thus it will be. Word has gone round the workshops of Paris, and you will see.' We did see.

The day of the funeral was beautifully bright and sunny; the whole of Paris was in the streets. Some friends had given us a window looking on to the procession, and early in the morning we took our places. It soon became difficult to move about. The street below us became a swaying mass. All the working men of

Paris seemed to be out in blouses—some blue, some white. A very foolish conversation went on just behind me as to which were the more dangerous, the men in the blue or the white blouses. It was decided that the blue blouse was the sign of disorder, and whenever several blue blouses were to be seen together in the street below us 'that means mischief,' said my neighbours. In truth, it was a most impressive sight: the vast crowds, the uncovered heads, the absolute silence as the bier went by, bore testimony to the respect of the people. When at last the burly form of Gambetta, the President of the Chamber, was seen walking in front of the deputies, a faint cry of 'Vive Gambetta!' was raised, but was not taken up, for, with both arms extended, he waved the people, as though saying, 'Hush, enough! We bury our liberator.' And so, with the whole of Paris to mourn him, their great citizen was carried to the grave, in all respect, as M. Magnin had said, but without enthusiasm. The elections that followed gave France a republic.

It is impossible to avoid contrasting in one's thoughts the uneventful, peaceful, and easy-going life of Englishmen in their island home with the fierce storm of emotions which swept over France after the war. Every thinking man and woman was then torn with rage, despair, and humiliation. Many of them had suffered the loss of their entire fortune, all had had losses, and mothers and wives had given the lives of those dearest to them—for what? A very charming young Frenchwoman, whose husband was in the Garde Nationale, and was in all the sorties from Paris during the siege, said to me that, bitter as had been their punishment, the cup was not yet full.

Perhaps enough has not been made in Europe of the extraordinary recovery of France after all her disasters. Who can doubt that she is now richer, stronger, happier, better educated, with a more stable Government, and a more general feeling of content than at any time in the last hundred years? I have just returned from Paris, and am immensely struck by the appearance of *bien-être* and happiness which pervades all classes. France has recovered her self-respect; she possesses herself again, and the old gaiety and elasticity of spirits have come back. The traveller is once again *le bien venu*. The terrible *affaire* has quieted down, and, as a clever Frenchwoman said to me, if we have had our Calas and our Dreyfus, at all events we have had veritable martyrs for the right. We have done what we could to make reparation.

In all that *affaire* poor Dreyfus probably is still the most to be pitied. 'I am not a man strong enough to stand as the symbol of truth and justice,' he is reported to have said. But in spite of recent alleged discoveries the *affaire* is over, and has left the country stronger and wiser than before. Was it not Voltaire who spoke of France as the 'whipped cream' of Europe? The grace, ease, and charm which were always hers she wears to-day with the consciousness that behind them are the solid qualities of hard work, a splendid fortitude, and a grand intellectual equipment.

ETHEL B. HARRISON.

IN THE THROES OF COMPOSITION.

THAT the work of composing is not affected by time, or place, or circumstance was one of Dr. Johnson's dogmatic assertions. He snorted scornfully at Boswell's contention that the weather has an irresistible influence upon the mind, especially in the case of writers of weak frames and fine sensibilities. 'A man,' said he, 'can write just as well at one time as at another, if he will only set his mind to it.' 'To temperance every day is bright, and every hour is propitious to diligence,' he writes in one of his *Idler* papers. 'He that shall resolutely excite his faculties, or exert his virtues, will soon make himself superior to the seasons, and may set at defiance the morning mist and the evening damp, the blasts of the east and the clouds of the south.'

Johnson had a robust common sense and a penetrating understanding which enabled him usually to get at the right in an argument. But the spirit of contradiction or sophistry occasionally took possession of him, and when in the mood of contrariness he would bring all the powers of his mind to the support of a contention which he knew in his heart to be wrong; so that, as Boswell says, it is not easy to arrive at his real opinion on subjects unconnected with the great truths of religion and morality, on which alone he was always serious and consistent. His contention that the mind of a writer is ever in working order, that composition is merely a matter of sitting down at a table, pen in hand, with paper and ink, and writing one's thoughts, is sadly contradicted by the history of literary achievement. Is it not the common experience of all who write, to find themselves at times in so barren a condition of mind that it is with pain they can think of something to say on the subject with which they propose to deal, and that when the laggard thought is at last forthcoming, to give form and harmony to the sentence in which they endeavour to body it forth on paper is a work of irritating labour? The powers of speculation and invention lie dormant. The lamp of imagination has burned out. The brain is dull and heavy, and seems absolutely incapable of originating a thought. Language is halting and commonplace. There is no 'go' in the sentences; they positively refuse to march. The

very pen, whose touch in the moment of inspiration is thrilling seems weighted with lead.

Owen Meredith sings :

Talk not of genius baffled ; genius is master of man ;
Genius does what it must, and talent does what it can.

The genius who is a writer will, it is true, eventually deliver himself somehow of his message to mankind, no matter what difficulties may be in the way ; but it is an exaggeration to say that even he is master of time and place and circumstance. Take Carlyle, who as a writer was a genius if ever there was one. In time he succeeded in sending his message forth in thirty-four volumes. What a prodigious amount of work ! Yet composition seems to have been a torture to him. In 1824, in the very glamour of the beginning of his literary career, he said : ' Certainly no one wrote with such tremendous difficulty as I do,' and he added wistfully, ' shall I ever write with ease ? ' The effort of writing was always laborious to him. He wrote, as his brother John so well expresses it, ' with his heart's blood ' ; and as Froude adds, ' in a state of fevered tension.' In his ' Journal ' he thus soliloquises after he had completed ' The French Revolution ' in 1837 :

I have felt in a general way as if I should like never to write any line more in the world. Literature ! Oh, Literature ! Oh, that Literature had never been devised ! Then, perhaps, were I a living man, and not a half-dead, enchanted, spectre-haunted nondescript. On the whole, however, resting and ' lazily simmering ' will no longer do. This day I must begin writing again—article, bad luck to it ! on Sir Walter Scott for ' Mill's Review.' I return, not like a warrior to his battle-field, but like a galley slave scourged back by the whip of necessity. Surely, in a few years I shall either get out of this dreadful state by some alleviation, or else die and sink under it. I feel, in a general way, that my only hope is to die. Take up the oar, however, and tug, since it must be so.

On the other hand, when Anthony Trollope decided to write a novel he first fixed its length—so many thousand words ; and allowed himself a certain time—so many months, in which to complete it. His average output was forty pages a week, with 240 words to a page. ' I have prided myself in completing my work exactly within the proposed dimensions,' he says ; ' but I have prided myself especially in completing it within the proposed time.' It was his practice, when at home, to be at his writing-table every morning (Sunday excepted) at half-past five o'clock. He paid his groom 5*l.* a year extra to call him about

five o'clock and bring him a cup of coffee. He turned out his allotted amount of composition with amazing ease and regularity before he ate his breakfast. For him there were no such torturing questions as 'How shall I begin?'—'What on earth shall I say?' For him there was no nibbling at his penholder, no vacant gazing out of the window. He had always something to say and words to express it with clearness. He acquired such a facility as a writer—or rather he was endowed with so rare an intellectual and physical equipment—that he dashed off the chapters of his novels with astonishing rapidity. He timed himself in composition as with a stop-watch—so many minutes, so many lines. His rate of writing was 250 words for every quarter of an hour. He composed with his watch on the table before him, and found invariably that the 250 words were forthcoming regularly as the minute hand reached the quarter.

As a surveyor of the Post Office he had to travel in the provinces a good deal. The hours he passed in a railway carriage were equally fruitful in literary work. 'I made for myself,' he says, 'a little tablet, and found after a few days' exercise that I could write as quickly in a railway carriage as I could at my desk. I worked with a pencil, and what I wrote my wife copied afterwards.' If he slept a night in London, he would be found in the early morning in the long drawing-room of the Athenæum turning out his inevitable 250 words every quarter of an hour. Even during a terribly rough voyage between Marseilles and Alexandria—when he had to visit Egypt on the business of the Post Office—he wrote the allotted number of pages every day. 'On this occasion,' he says, 'more than once I left my paper on the cabin table, rushing away to be sick in the privacy of my state-room.' What a triumph of the mind over physical disability! The average man oppressed by sea-sickness could not write a sentence if it were to calm the raging storm.

Trollope derided the idea that a writer should wait until inspiration moved him. 'When I have heard such doctrines preached I have hardly been able to repress my scorn,' he said. 'To me it would not be more absurd if the shoemaker were to wait for inspiration, or the tallow-chandler for the divine moment of melting.' 'I was once told,' he also said, 'that the surest aid to the writing of a book was a piece of cobbler's wax on my chair. I certainly believe in cobbler's wax much more than in inspiration.' 'It can be done anywhere,' he declared, referring

to composition; 'in any clothes, which is a great thing; at any hours—to which happy accident in literature I owe my success.'

We have in Trollope, then, a man who, in Johnson's words, could write just as well at one time as at another; but the truth is that Trollope was, in that respect, a phenomenon in literature. Johnson himself was so constitutionally indolent, and found the labour of composition so hard, that when placed by his State pension in 1762 above the necessity of writing for a livelihood, his literary output shrank considerably, and, in fact, 'A Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland' and 'Lives of the Poets' were the only works of any importance from his pen during the twenty-two years of life that remained to him after he came into the possession of 200*l.* per annum. But Trollope had an amazingly healthy mental and physical equipment, a cheerful temperament, grit and determination, a keen delight in literary labour; and his mind, being a perfect piece of mechanism, worked with the ease of a machine. These gifts, mental and physical, he probably inherited from his mother, who, in her way, was a very remarkable woman. Her husband failed in everything to which he put his hand, and she was over fifty years old when compelled to take to literature to support her family. She continued writing until she was seventy-six, and in those twenty-five years she produced as many as 114 volumes. At Bruges, whither the family accompanied the father, who had to fly from England to escape arrest for debt, Mrs. Trollope nursed her dying husband and son, and wrote her novels at the same time. 'The doctor's vials and the ink-bottle held equal places in my mother's rooms,' says Trollope. 'I have written many novels under many circumstances; but I doubt much whether I could write one when my whole heart was by the bedside of a dying son.' 'She was at her table at four in the morning, and had finished her work before the world had begun to be aroused.' 'Of all people I have known,' Trollope also says, 'she was the most joyous, or at any rate the most capable of joy.' That, in truth, was the secret of the industry and the ability to write under any circumstances of both mother and son—high spirits and good health. For them, happily, composition had no throes. They wrote serenely, without any worry or fretfulness.

Sir Walter Scott said he had never known a man of genius who could be perfectly regular in his habits; whilst he had known many blockheads who were models of order and method,

If Anthony Trollope was not a genius he was by no means a blockhead. As to the quality of the fiction which he turned out so mechanically, there is the enthusiastic testimony of Nathaniel Hawthorne, who, in his novels and in his method of composition, was the very antithesis of Trollope. 'Have you ever read the novels of Anthony Trollope?' he writes. 'They precisely suit my taste—solid and substantial, written on the strength of beef and through the inspiration of ale, and just as real as if some giant had hewn a great lump out of the earth and put it under a glass case, with all its inhabitants going about their daily business and not suspecting that they were being made a show of. And these books are just as English as a beef-steak.'

It was in his 'Autobiography,' which was published after his death, that Trollope made this frank and perhaps cynical but certainly most interesting disclosure of the manner in which he wrote his novels. Among the comments by literary men which it evoked was one by Freeman. 'I myself know what fixed hours of work are and their value,' said the historian, 'but I could not undertake to write about William Rufus or Appius Claudius up to a certain moment on the clock and to stop at that moment. I suppose it was from his habits of official business that Mr. Trollope learned to do it, and every man undoubtedly knows best how to do his own work. Still, it is strange that works of imagination did not suffer by such a way of doing.' But, surely, Freeman forgot the difference in literary workmanship between historical writing and fiction. Freeman could not have evolved from his inner consciousness William Rufus or Appius Claudius, as Trollope brought forth the famous Archdeacon Grantly in 'The Warden' without ever having met an archdeacon or ever having lived in a cathedral city except London. The historian deals with real persons and events; the novelist is concerned with fictitious characters and experiences which he can mould as he pleases. Imaginative writing is perhaps the highest form of literary effort; but it is also the easiest—easiest, that is, to a mind equipped for such work with the qualities of observation, insight, and imagination. To a man like Trollope, with exuberant productive powers, the writing of a novel was easy and swift of accomplishment. To write history as Freeman wrote it—scientifically, with profound accuracy, involving as it does study, research, and investigation—must necessarily be slow and toilsome work. The oblivion which has, to some extent, fallen upon

Trollope's works has been ascribed to this confession of his mechanical method of composition. The suggestion appears to me to be far-fetched. Surely the interest of the reader in a book would be whetted rather than dulled if he knew that the author spent a month over each sentence, or wrote a chapter in the twinkling of an eye. If Trollope's novels are now neglected it is not because he turned them out with clock-like regularity, but simply and solely because, in the ever varying taste of readers of popular fiction, they have ceased to be interesting. For my part, I never think of the fertile and industrious Trollope without mourning over his lost opportunities. Such was his marvellous fecundity of mind, that if he had called in the aid of a shorthand clerk he might have dictated one novel to his secretary while he himself simultaneously wrote another, or he might have cultivated the trick of writing fiction with his left and right hands together. Certainly, had he lived in this day of the typewriter he could have doubled his literary output at least.

Southey was another methodical and rapid literary craftsman. 'I am a quiet, patient, easy-going hack of the mule breed; regular as clockwork in my pace, sure-footed, bearing the burden which is laid on me, and only obstinate in choosing my own path,' he wrote to a friend. But his method was by no means simple. He was a poet, an historian, a critic, and a miscellaneous writer; he turned out an enormous quantity of matter, and succeeded in doing so by working fourteen hours a day and diversifying his labours within his daily round. He had six tables in his library. He wrote poetry at one, history at another, criticism at a third, and so on with the other subjects upon which he was engaged, and when he was tired of spinning his brains into verse he turned to history and criticism. There is a story that he once described to Madame de Staël the division of his time—two hours before breakfast for history, two hours for reading after, two hours for the composition of poetry, two hours for criticism, and so on through all his working day. 'And pray, Mr. Southey,' queried the Frenchwoman, somewhat unkindly, 'when do you think?' But surely he did well to follow the bent of his mental idiosyncrasy? 'Don't swear and bid me do one thing at a time,' he wrote to a friend. 'I tell you I can't afford to do one thing at a time—no, nor two neither. It is only by doing many things that I continue to do so much, for I cannot work long together at anything without hurting myself; and so I do everything by

heats; then, by the time I am tired of one my inclination for another is coming round.'

Is there a remedy for the barren or inactive state of mind which comes to all writers who are not Trollopes or Southey's? Can the reluctant and sluggish brain be whipped into activity? Some writers found in alcohol the quickening spirit which kindled their torpid imaginations, and aroused to full activity their drowsy powers of mind. Moore, who was fond of wine, sings:

If with water you fill up your glasses
You'll never write anything wise;
For wine is the horse of Parnassus
Which hurries a bard to the skies.

Sheridan needed the cerebral excitement caused by wine when engaged in composition. 'If an idea be reluctant a glass of port ripens it and it bursts forth,' he said; 'if it comes freely a glass of port is a glorious reward for it.' With Sheridan, indeed, it was easy to provide 'an excuse for the glass.' Hollands was Byron's favourite drink when he desired to set his mind on fire. 'He assured me,' writes Medwin, 'that gin and water was the true hippocrene, and the source of all his inspiration.' Fielding 'got up steam' by a glass of brandy and water. Wilkie Collins put himself in the mood for writing 'The Moonstone' or 'The Woman in White' by doses of champagne and brandy.

'Claret is a liquor for boys and port for men; but he who aspires to be a hero must drink brandy,' said Johnson. Yet he compiled his Dictionary on tea. 'A hardened and shameless tea drinker,' he called himself, 'who with tea amuses the evening, with tea solaces the midnight, and with tea welcomes the morning.' He did not believe in exciting the imagination by intoxicants. He held that wine gave a man nothing, but only put in motion what had been locked up in frost. 'A man,' said he, 'should so cultivate his mind as to have that confidence and readiness without wine which wine gives.' A good deal depends upon the individual temperament. In the case of Charles Lamb indulgence in beer or wine thawed his frost-bound mind. 'It lighted up his fading fancy,' says one of his biographers, 'enriched his humour, and impelled the struggling thought or beautiful image into day.' To Lamb and Burns, as well as to most writers noted for their fondness for alcohol, drinking was more an intellectual than a sensual pleasure. The literary

temperament, nervous and highly strung as it usually is, and a prey to black despair, often finds in alcohol the fairy which lifts it on its airy wings out of the depths of mental depression and barrenness to the heights of intellectual exaltation and literary activity. Thomson frequently composed with a bowl of punch before him, for he found the spirit quickened the action of his intellect and made his thoughts run brisker. There is a story related of Addison that he often composed walking up and down the long drawing-room of Holland House, with a bottle of sherry and a glass at each end, and when his creative faculty flagged he sought for 'thoughts that breathe and words that burn' in the wine. In Scotland, we are told, literature is cultivated on a little oatmeal. Yet James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd, went so far as to declare that a man who did not drink could not be a poet, or in other words that a sober poet was an impossibility. While Hogg was at Keswick, Southey, at his invitation, called to see him at his inn. 'I was a grieved as well as an astonished man,' says Hogg, 'when I found that he refused all participation in my beverage of rum punch. For a poet to refuse his glass was to me a phenomenon, and I confess I doubted in my own mind, and doubt to this day, if perfect sobriety and transcendent poetic genius can exist together. In Scotland I am sure they cannot.' The first time that Hogg dined with Walter Scott he advanced in familiarity, as the wine passed, from 'Mr. Scott' to 'Shirra' (Sheriff), 'Scott,' 'Walter,' and finally 'Waltie,' till at supper he convulsed everyone by addressing Mrs. Scott familiarly as 'Charlotte.' Scott himself drank whisky rather than wine. 'He sincerely preferred,' says Lockhart, 'a tumbler of whisky-toddy to the most precious liquid-ruby that ever flowed in the cup of a prince.' But perhaps the only great poet who was intemperate was Burns. Wordsworth—to quote but one of many examples of great poets who were abstemious—pleads guilty to having got drunk only once. In 'The Prelude,' describing a visit to Milton's room at Cambridge, he says:

O temperate Bard,

Be it confest that for the first time seated
 Within thy innocent lodge and oratory,
 One of a festive circle, I poured out
 Libations to thy memory, drank till pride
 And gratitude grew dizzy in a brain
 Never excited by the fumes of wine
 Before that hour or since.

Milton himself said : ' He who would write an epic for the nation must subsist on vegetables and water.' Shelley and Chatterton were also water-drinkers as well as vegetarians, not, however, because they agreed with Milton, but because they had no taste for strong drink or flesh meats. They could not enjoy the delicacies of the table. Good things, in the way of eating and drinking, would have been wasted upon them.

Various, indeed, are the means to which writers have recourse in order to ease the throes of composition. Coffee is commonly indulged in as a stimulant for a tired brain, especially by literary night-workers. Some writers take a brisk walk or a ride or some other form of outdoor exercise before sitting down to work. Others during urgent and continuous labour wrap wet towels around their heads. I know one writer who has a profound belief in the efficacy of a cold bath as an aid to composition. I know another who keeps his feet in mustard and water at his writing desk. Darwin found a literary stimulant in snuff.

Probably most of the literary work by men is turned out in clouds of smoke. ' In common with nine-tenths of my literary brethren I am a constant smoker,' said James Payn. ' I smoke the whole time I am engaged in composition (three hours *per diem*) and often after meals, but very light tobacco—*latakia*. That it stimulates the imagination I have little doubt, and as I have worked longer and more continuously for thirty years than any other author (save one), I cannot believe that tobacco has done me any harm.' Milton, though a water-drinker and a vegetarian, smoked. Tobacco undoubtedly conduces to thinking. It is also a sedative. Charles Kingsley often worked himself into a white heat of composition over the book upon which he was engaged, until, too excited to write any more, he would calm himself down with a pipe and a walk in his garden. ' There are two things for which I never grudge money—books and cigars,' said Buckle, the historian. But tobacco is perhaps best suited for the poet. Carlyle said that smoking brought to him ' ideal cloudy dreams,' and partaken in repose and inaction—when it is most thoroughly enjoyed—tobacco is, indeed, conducive to ' sweet thoughts and quiet breathings.' Tennyson was an inveterate smoker. Byron, however, preferred to chew tobacco rather than to smoke it.

Hawthorne, it will be remembered, said of Trollope's novels that they seemed to have been ' written on the strength of beef,'

and that they are 'as English as a beef-steak.' Is the stomach, then, the seat of literary power? Does thought vary with the kind of food that is eaten? If this were true, it might be possible so to cultivate the mind by a system of dieting as to make it bring forth its best powers in literary composition. Skill in the treatment of land has been brought almost to perfection. The agriculturist knows well how to make poor soil and rich soil alike yield their best by manuring, and the rotation of crops. May not a system of farming be applied also to the brain? May not the faculties of reflection, and reasoning, and imagination be developed by a steady course of certain dishes? This much, at least, is generally believed, that some foods are more conducive than others to mental activity. It is said that phosphorus is the light of the intellect, and that a liberal diet of fish, which is supposed to be richer in phosphorus than any other food, is essential for the repair of the wear and tear of the brain. An abnormal fondness for fish is a sure sign of the young literary aspirant. He stands enraptured before the marble slab of a fishmonger. It contains, in his opinion, the raw material of deathless verse and prose! That haddock, selling at a few pence per lb., might lead, if properly assimilated, to the production of another 'Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire,' or 'The Origin of Species.' From that trout or plaice might spring another 'Deserted Village,' or 'Ode to a Skylark.' There are potentialities of a 'Hamlet,' a 'Don Juan,' or a 'Jane Eyre' in that salmon. Indeed, this belief that the eating of fish stimulates the flow of thought, and calls up appropriate words for their expression, lingers occasionally beyond the aspirant stage of literature. I know an old journalist who seeks inspiration for his nightly 'leading article' in a supper of stout and oysters, or salmon mayonnaise, or lobster salad. I cannot, however, say that there is much phosphorescence in his effusions. They are more solid than brilliant.

Still, one does not find that the authors of books which continue to arrest, through the centuries, the attention of the world, were remarkable for a fondness for fish. It is true that stewed lampreys was the only dish that would tempt Pope to get out of bed for dinner when he stayed at Lord Bolingbroke's, but that fish was regarded as an epicurean treat, rather than as the physical basis for the 'Essay on Man' or the 'Rape of the Lock.' Moore tells us that Byron informed him he preferred

fish to flesh. 'The noble poet,' as Moore was fond of describing him, had a notion that animal food debased character and intellect. 'I remember one day,' writes Moore, 'as I sat opposite to him, employed, I suppose, rather earnestly over a beefsteak, after watching me for a few seconds he said in a grave tone of inquiry, "Moore, don't you find eating beefsteak makes you ferocious?"' Byron—'to attenuate and keep up the ethereal part of me,' as he puts it—lived principally on biscuits and soda-water.

But Dryden, accepting an invitation to supper, unpoetically wrote: 'If beggars might be choosers, a chine of honest bacon would please my appetite more than all the marrow puddings, for I like them better plain, having a very vulgar stomach.' Johnson also possessed a taste for coarse dishes such as boiled pork, and veal pie stuffed with plums and sugar; and, like George III., had a voracious attachment to a boiled leg of mutton. Boiled beans and bacon was Thackeray's favourite dish. In all these cases the gratification of the appetite rather than the stimulation of the intellect was the object in view. We know that Macaulay had an abhorrence of cold boiled veal, for he wrote to his sister in reference to John Wilson Croker: 'I hate him as I hate cold boiled veal;' and Goldsmith's dislike of cold mutton is apparent from his line that Edmund Burke was doomed to 'Eat mutton cold and cut blocks with a razor.' Curiously enough, Tennyson had a liking for 'boiled salt beef and new potatoes.' When his friends joked with him on his peculiar taste, he would reply good-humouredly, 'All fine-natured men know what is good to eat.' But what he regarded as a perfect dinner, according to his son, was 'a beef-steak, a potato, a cut of cheese, a pint of port, and afterwards a pipe, never a cigar,' a meal which at least was in harmony with his powerful physical frame, if not with his poetic temperament. One evening that Tennyson and Thackeray dined together, the poet declared his love for Catullus, and quoted some of his lines. 'I do not rate him highly; I could do better myself,' said the novelist. Next morning, Tennyson received a letter from Thackeray, humbly apologising for his boasting. 'When I have dined,' he wrote, 'sometimes I believe myself to be equal to the greatest painters and poets.' He added, 'That delusion goes off, and then I know what a small fiddle mine is, and what small tunes I play upon it.'

It would seem, too, that the greengrocer runs the fishmonger

and the butcher close in providing the writer with material for the up-keep of his brain. Sir Isaac Newton wrote his 'Principia,' in which he explains the laws which govern the universe, on a scanty daily allowance of vegetables, bread and water. Was there ever a more notable example of plain living and high thinking?

Shelley was of opinion that abstinence from flesh meats clears and subtilises the intellectual faculties. He never had regular meals; he ate only when he was hungry, and often at the end of the day he would say to his wife, 'Mary, have I dined?' Bread was literally his staff of life. 'When he felt hungry,' his friend Thomas Jefferson Hogg writes, 'he would dash into the first baker's shop, buy a loaf, and rush out again bearing it under his arm; and he strode onward in his rapid course breaking off pieces of bread and greedily swallowing them.' Professor Dowden in his biography of the poet says: 'Around the seat on which he read or wrote a circle of crumbs and fragments would lie scattered on the floor. He made his meal of bread luxurious by the addition of common pudding raisins, purchased at some mean shop, where, customers being few, he might be speedily served, and these he carried loose in his waistcoat pocket.' It would seem, therefore, as if the reasoning and imaginative powers can be as active on salads or cereals as on soles or steaks.

Indeed, I have heard it asserted by a poet that the physical basis of all good poetry is starvation. It is my friend's experience that after an excellent dinner his fancy is humble and earth-crawling; but that by abstaining for a day or two from food he falls into a sort of intellectual trance, and, like the ascetic monks of old, sees visions which he is able to describe in inspired phrases. Again, some of our greatest writers were martyrs to delicate and infirm stomachs. Carlyle, we know, was a life-long victim of dyspepsia. 'A rat gnawing at the pit of my stomach' is his terrible description of his disorder. However, dyspepsia is by no means the certain sign of literary ability, nor can it be conducive to inspiration in composition. A genius of course may write and write and be dyspeptic. He can rise superior to the chronic pangs of indigestion as to every other form of intermittent physical pain and discomfort. But for the average writer successfully to grapple with the throes of composition there must be no rat gnawing at the pit of his stomach. Still, indigestion has its literary uses. I know writers who are so

incorrigibly cheerful, optimistic, and high-spirited by temperament that when they are required to look out on the comedy of life with a jaundiced eye, for literary purposes, they steep their minds in the necessary gloom and become moody and irritable by bringing on a bad attack of indigestion.

Absolute silence is essential to most writers if they are to preserve a calm and unruffled temper in the throes of composition. 'I require quiet, and myself to myself, more than any man when I write,' said Tennyson. The slightest noise stopped the flow of Carlyle's ideas. Even the crowing of a cock drove him to distraction. What an inscrutable mental and physical equipment was his! To me it seems that the crowing of a cock heard in London would light the lamp of imagination in the most prosaic of men—such are the associations of home and the atmosphere of the country which cluster round the shrill chanticleer—and transform him for a few glorious moments into an inspired poet. Carlyle, in order that he might be enveloped in silence profound while he wrestled with his messages to humanity, had a sound-proof writing room—double-walled with a space between to deaden external noise—erected on the top of his residence in Cheyne Row. The workmen engaged in the construction of the chamber made chaos of the house during the operations of building, and Carlyle sought refuge in bed from the hideous clamour, with what result he thus relates: 'One Irish artist, I remember, had been ignorant that lath and plaster was not a floor; he from above, accordingly, came plunging down into my bedroom, catching himself by the armpits, fast swinging astonished in the vortex of old laths, lime, and dust.' And when the 'sound-proof room' was finished it turned out to be 'by far the noisiest in the house,' 'a kind of infernal miracle.' What untold sufferings the sage endured—if we are to believe him—in the throes of composition! Here is a characteristic heart-groan over the slow progress he was making with 'Frederick' in 1861. 'Seldom was a poor man's heart so near broken by utter weariness, disgust, and long-continued despair over an undoable job. The only point is, said heart must not break altogether, but finish, if it can.'

The slightest noise had an irritating effect also on George Eliot. In the early years of her career she and George Henry Lewes lived at Richmond, and had only one sitting-room in which they did their literary work together. The scratching of

Lewes's pen used to affect her nerves to such an extent that it nearly drove her wild; and when their circumstances were improved by the remarkable success of her novels she treated herself to a separate study in which she wrote alone with closed doors.

Goldsmith, on the other hand, was indifferent to time, place, and circumstance. He never wrote with more natural and unaffected grace and charm than in the days of hard fortune when he starved in his wretched room in Green Arbour Court. Percy visited him there in March 1759, and found him writing his 'Inquiry into the State of Polite Learning.' There was but one chair in the room, which he gave to his visitor, while he deposited himself in the window. 'As they were conversing,' we are told, 'some one gently rapped at the door, and being desired to come in, a poor ragged little girl of very decent behaviour entered, who dropping a curtsy said: "My mamma sends her compliments, and begs the favour of you to lend her a chamber-pot full of coals."' It was in this tenement lodging that Goldsmith wrote his delightful essays for 'The Bee.' Sometimes he was found wanting; his copy was not forthcoming on the day appointed, but his remissness apparently was due rather to indolence than to lack of inspiration. One day a gentleman called on the landlady of Green Arbour Court and desired to be directed to Goldsmith's room. The good woman was alarmed to hear the door of the room locked the moment the visitor entered, followed by the noise of a rather angry altercation; and her apprehensions were only increased by the perfect silence which followed for three hours. She was immensely relieved, however, when the door of Goldsmith's room was again opened, and the gentleman, in high good-humour, gave her money to fetch supper for her lodger from a neighbouring tavern. The visitor was the editor of 'The Bee,' who compelled his laggard contributor to sit down, in duress and under a threat of a thrashing, to write the essay perhaps on 'Happiness in a Great Measure Dependent on Constitution,' or 'On the Instability of Worldly Grandeur,' or 'Of the Pride and Luxury of the Middling Class of People.'

Jane Austen, a perfect literary artist, like Goldsmith, wrote her novels without strain or stress in the common sitting-room of the family with the domestic life in full swing about her. The only interruption the gentle lady dreaded was the untimely appearance of a visitor. Not that it dried up the flow of ideas,

but she was ashamed to be known as a writer, or 'a blue,' as literary women were then derisively called; and so to save her reputation she would throw her handkerchief over her manuscript till the visitor had departed. Mrs. Oliphant, the author of more than one hundred novels, also wrote in the midst of her family. Referring to her habits before her marriage she says:

I had no table even to myself, much less a room to work in, but sat at the corner of the family table with my writing-book, with everything going on as if I had been making a shirt instead of writing a book. Our rooms in those days were sadly wanting in artistic arrangement. The table was in the middle of the room, the centre round which everybody sat, with the candles or lamp upon it. My mother sat always at needle-work of some kind and talked to whoever might be present, and I took my share in the conversation, going on all the same with my story, the little groups of imaginary persons, those other talks, evolving themselves quite undisturbed.

After her marriage she wrote with her children playing about her, peeping over her shoulder and even playfully snatching the very pen out of her hand. She would pause in her composition to kiss the little ones; and then, as she expresses it, 'thus refreshed in heart and spirit' she would placidly return to her work. 'It would put me out now,' she wrote in the years of her widowhood, 'to have some one sitting at the same table talking while I worked—at least I think it would put me out, with that sort of conventionalism which grows upon one. But up to this date (1888) I have never been shut up in a separate room, or hedged off with any observances. My study, all the study I have ever attained to, is the little second drawing-room where all the (feminine) life of the house goes on, and I don't think I have ever had two hours undisturbed (except at night, when everybody is in bed) during my whole literary life.' Leitch Ritchie, the author of 'Weary Foot Common' and editor of 'Chambers's Journal,' said to James Payn: 'As a young husband I have often written for the Press for hours, while at the same time my foot has rocked the cradle of a child.' Composition—especially invention—in such circumstances seemed to Payn to be an impossibility, and he said so to Ritchie. 'And yet necessity, my young friend, is said to be the mother of invention,' was Ritchie's half gay and half grave reply. 'You do not know what it is to live by your pen *only*!' Another writer who found nothing uncongenial to literary work in the full swing of domestic surroundings was Charlotte Brontë. The female servant of the family, eighty years old, was feeble and dim of vision. She peeled potatoes for the

dinner imperfectly; and Charlotte Brontë, engaged in the kitchen on the composition of 'Jane Eyre,' irritated by the sight of the specks on the vegetables, would lay down her pen and complete the peeling, and then, without any check to her inspiration, resume the thread of her narrative.

Sir Walter Scott, like Anthony Trollope, seems to have never known what it is to bite his nails for a thought or a phrase. The moment he sat down at the table and lifted his pen, he was possessed, as it were, with a whirlwind of inspiration. He composed with such marvellous rapidity that rarely was his pen stopped for want of a word. If the word did not come readily he left a blank, to be filled subsequently, and sped on with the work. He was also totally indifferent to his surroundings. His study was always open to his children. 'He never considered their tattle as any disturbance; they went and came as pleased their fancy; he was always ready to answer their questions; and when they, unconscious how he was engaged, entreated him to lay down his pen and tell them a story, he would take them on his knee, repeat a ballad or legend, kiss them and set them down again to their marbles and ninepins, and resume his labours as if refreshed by the interruption.' What an extraordinary scene of literary work amid harassing physical discomfort is that which Fanny Kemble describes in her 'Records of my Childhood':—

I can never forget the description Sir Adam Fergusson gave me of a morning he had passed with Scott at Abbotsford, which at that time was still unfinished, swarming with carpenters, painters, masons and bricklayers, and surrounded with all the dirt and disorderly discomfort inseparable from the process of house building. The room they sat in was in the roughest condition which admitted of their occupying it at all; the raw, new chimney smoked intolerably. Out of doors the place was one mass of bricks, mortar, scaffolding, tiles and slates. A heavy mist shrouded the whole landscape of lovely Tweedside, and distilled in a cold, persistent and dumb drizzle. Maida, the well-beloved staghound, kept fidgeting in and out of the room, Walter Scott every five minutes exclaiming, 'Eh, Adam, the puir beast is just wearyin' to get out!' or 'Eh, Adam, the puir creature's just crying to come in!' when Sir Adam would open the door to the raw chilly air for the wet muddy hound's exit or entrance, while Scott, with his face swollen with a grievous toothache, and one hand pressed hard to his cheek, with the other was writing the inimitably humorous opening chapters of 'The Antiquary,' which he passed across the table, sheet by sheet, to his friend, saying, 'Now, Adam, d'ye think that'll do?'

Scott was a man of robust physical constitution, with a passion for active life out of doors, and he had a brain just as clear and strong and powerful. But, nevertheless, he must have had his

hours of gloom and depression, in which composition is indeed a hard and bitter task, for in his 'Life of Dryden' he speaks of 'the apparently causeless fluctuations of spirits incident to one doomed to labour incessantly in the feverish exercise of the imagination.' The throes of composition are, indeed, better faced, as Bulwer Lytton faced them, alone in a peaceful study with nothing to distract one's attention. Lytton's richly furnished room, with its pictures and laden book-shelves—potent inspirers to the literary man as he looks about for an idea or an expression—was isolated from the rest of the house, so that the least noise, which would have irritated him in the extreme, might be intercepted. Undoubtedly the most perfect atmosphere for a literary worker is that of a quiet study, with drawn curtains, a bright lamp, and a cheerful fire, in the long winter evenings.

How Charles Lamb and Mary Lamb worked together in the writing of the 'Tales from Shakespeare' is thus described by Mary in a letter to a friend: 'You would like to see us as we often sit writing at the same table (but not on one cushion sitting), like Hermia and Helena in "A Midsummer Night's Dream"; rather like an old literary Darby and Joan, I taking snuff, and he groaning all the while and saying he can make nothing of it, which he always says till he has finished, and then he finds out that he has made something of it.' Lamb, despite the apparent spontaneity of his writings, found at times composition intolerably slow, and the labour of producing it exhausting. He complained in a letter to Bernard Barton in 1824 that he had been for weeks 'insuperably dull and lethargic'; and calls his attention to what he describes as 'a futile effort' in the 'London Magazine' 'wrong from me,' he groans, 'with slow pain.' This is the charming essay entitled 'Blakesmoor,' which to the reader has nothing forced, and possesses all the ease, grace, distinction, and inevitableness of the genial essayist.

To Lamb a walk through crowded and bustling Fleet Street proved a stimulus to his jaded faculties. Barry Cornwall also found not distraction but inspiration in the roar of London. The poet composed best when alone in a crowd, and on a line or a couplet striking him he would go into a hallway and jot it down. Dickens suffered from sluggishness of mind out of London. In a letter to John Forster from Lausanne, in 1846, while engaged on 'Dombey and Son,' he complains that he was not getting on rapidly with the novel. 'I suppose,' he adds, 'this is partly the effect of

two years' ease, and partly of the absence of streets and numbers of figures. I can't express how much I want these. It seems as if they supplied something to my brain which it cannot bear, when busy, to lose. For a week or a fortnight I can write prodigiously in a retired place (as at Broadstairs), and a day in London sets me up again and starts me. But the toil and labour of writing day after day without that magic lantern is IMMENSE!! I don't say this at all in low spirits, for we are perfectly comfortable here, and I like the place very much indeed, and the people are even more friendly and fond of me than they were at Genoa. I only mention it as a curious fact which I have never had an opportunity of finding out before, *My* figures seem disposed to stagnate without crowds about them. I wrote very little in Genoa (only the "Chimes"), and fancied myself conscious of some such influence there—but Lord! I had two miles of streets, at least, lighted at night, to walk about in; and a great theatre to repair to every night.'

If some writers can successfully wrestle with the throes of composition in any place, at any hour, or at any season, most writers undoubtedly are influenced by their surroundings, and their varying idiosyncrasies in this respect afford a curious study. To some the moments of rarest intellectual exaltation come when they are in the country, in the spring or summer months, amid brilliant sunshine, and glowing flowers, and singing birds, and leafy trees, and emerald fields. Other writers find the rigid concentration, the intense thinking essential to composition, impossible amid rural sights and sounds. The singing of a bird, the sunshine gleaming on the meadows, the tapping of a leaf on the window pane, the buzzing of a bee, the vivid colouring of a passing butterfly's wing, have a disturbing and distracting influence—the irresistible voices of nature rendering composition an intolerable labour—and it is only in London, amid the rumble and roar of the crowded traffic, the whirl and jingle of the hansom, the blatancy of the piano-organ, the ceaseless clatter of the 'buses, that they find the repose, the restfulness, and the stimulus for literary work. 'One thing about London impresses me,' says Lowell in an eloquent passage, 'beyond any other sound I have ever heard, and that is the low, unceasing roar one hears always in the air; it is not a mere accident, like a tempest or a cataract, but it is impressive, because it always indicates human will, and impulse, and conscious movement. And I confess that

when I hear it I almost feel as if I were listening to the roaring loom of time.' Standing by the Bank, Heinrich Heine declared he heard the world's pulse beat audibly. Surely most writers whose lot is cast in London must find inspiration in the audible beating of the world's pulse, or the sound in their ears of the roaring loom of time—in the metaphorical roar of London, that is, if not in its literal noise. As Cowper writes :

'Tis pleasant through the loop-holes of retreat
To peep at such a world. To see the stir
Of the Great Babel and not feel the crowd.
To hear the roar she sends through all her gates
At a safe distance, where the dying sound
Falls a soft murmur on the injured ear.

It is generally agreed that the morning or the afternoon is the best time of the day for literary work. But that again depends a good deal upon mood and habit and temperament. Brinsley Sheridan's best hours of composition were at night, and he required a profusion of lights around him while he wrote. 'I work best by candlelight,' said Southey. Mrs. Oliphant stated that for many years it was customary with her to write until two o'clock in the morning. 'It is past three at this moment, May 19th, 1895,' she added in her 'Journal,' 'but this is no longer usual with me.' Thackeray said his best work was done before ten o'clock in the morning, at which hour he breakfasted. He usually devoted the rest of his day to his family and friends. But it was in the middle of the night that the title for his most famous novel 'Vanity Fair' suddenly occurred to him. 'I jumped out of bed,' said he, 'and ran three times round my room, uttering as I went, "Vanity Fair!" "Vanity Fair!" "Vanity Fair!"' The story goes that Mrs. Emerson was sometimes startled at night by her husband rising to write down a 'happy thought' which came to his mind. 'What is the matter? Are you ill?' she would inquire; and the philosopher's soft voice would answer, 'No, my dear, only an idea.'

Scott in the first years of his literary career wrote generally at night; but on the advice of his physician whom he consulted for nervous headaches, from which he was suffering, he adopted habits of early rising and early work. He was out of bed by five o'clock all the year round, at his desk by six, and by the time that his family and visitors assembled at breakfast, between nine and ten, he had 'broken the neck of the day's work.' Dickens,

on ordinary working days, would write between breakfast and luncheon and devote the afternoon to the correction of what the morning had seen developed. Bulwer Lytton also worked in the forenoon. 'Nobody considers,' he wrote, 'how much writing may be done between the hours of ten and one if the mind be steadily fixed on the work. When the mind is at ease, the subject clearly laid down, and the heart of the writer in the work, a volume a month—an amount that might frighten a beginner to think of—is mere relaxation.' With a serene mind, and high spirits, and a full knowledge of the subject, composition is, perhaps, easy at any time of the day or night. But often the mind is dullest and the spirits heaviest in the morning hours. Cobwebs of sleepiness still hang about the brain. 'The morning is my writing time, and in the morning I have no spirits,' said Cowper. 'So much the worse for my correspondents. Sleep that refreshes my body seems to cripple me in every other respect. As the evening approaches I grow more alert, and when I am retiring to bed am more fit for mental occupation than at any other time. So it fares with us whom they call nervous.'

It is curious, too, to note the little superstitions of writers as to the use of particular pens, paper, and ink being conducive to the flow of thought. One can work only on paper of a certain quality and size. Another finds his mind barren of ideas unless he has his favourite pen in his hand. Dickens wrote on blue paper with blue ink. There is the curious case of Pope, 'paper-sparing Pope,' as his friend Swift described him. He wrote best on scraps of paper. The original copy of his translation of the 'Iliad,' which may be seen at the British Museum, is a strange spectacle. It is written almost entirely on the covers of letters, and sometimes between the very lines of the letters themselves. Bacon while in the throes of composition had music played in the room adjoining his study. Some writers before sitting down to work light the lamp of their imagination at the torch of their favourite author. Gray, for instance, always read Spenser as a preliminary to composition. Other writers find the spark to set fire to their intellects more readily in passages from their own pens. 'I read my own books hardly at all after once giving them forth,' says George Eliot, 'dreading to find them other than I wish.' But I doubt if that is a very common experience. The average writer finds in some of his own passages the light that lifts the gloom which enshrouds his mind; and like the poet he

wonders in his uninspired and commonplace moments at the thought and music which once emanated from his brain :

And when his voice is hushed and dumb,
 The flame burnt out, the glory dead,
 He feels a thrill of wonder come
 At that which his poor tongue has said ;
 And thinks of each diviner line—
 ' Only the hand that wrote was mine.'

An intellect which will work independently of time and place and circumstance, and of the accidents and worries of life, is a priceless possession to professional writers, who at times must ply their pens, whether or not they feel inclined for literary composition. Unhappily it is not given to all. Force of will, the rigid concentration of the mind on the subject in hand, work wonders in the case of the practised writer to whom the spur of necessity is applied. But the most common experience is that the mind has its variable moods. Even the writer with something to say, and feeling impelled to say it, often sits down at his table and finds himself unaccountably baffled at the moment he puts pen to paper. Distinction, freshness, charm, individuality—all are wanting in the sentences which, after much labour, he succeeds in composing. Intelligence, insight, and knowledge are still his, but for the moment the free and joyous play of his well-equipped mind is wanting. The literary impulse is gone; the literary afflatus is fled. For the moment the nerve centre of the brain seems paralysed. Some force is needed to set the intellect in motion. Suddenly the imagination is set on fire by some mysterious electric spark—through the agency, it may be, of a cigarette, a cup of coffee, a glass of champagne, or a glowing passage from a favourite poet. The jar and fret of nerve is over. The cloud is lifted from the mind. The feeling of mental exhaustion gives place to a conviction of literary power. Ideas come with a rush. This indeed is the literary mood. This, indeed, is the moment of literary inspiration. And composition, losing its throes, becomes a positive rapture.

MICHAEL MACDONAGH.

EPIC OF THE EXPRESS.

I.

Up from the vale he strode ; October gloom
 Made all below a crypt where Echo went
 Soft-footed like a sacristan—a tomb
 Of grey leaves huddled as if pestilent,
 Stricken swiftly, and with haste forsaken, dead.
 Above, the vault rock-pillared hung like rock.
 He stood where southward bends the river-bed,
 Spanned by a viaduct whose arches mock
 The chasm within the mountains ; all of time
 The day has crept minutely up the crest
 To left, then plunged below, again to climb
 The bluff opposing, as the god goes west.
 But Man has built a bridge, outstripped the years,
 Laughed at the valley and the snarling stream
 Which frets about those adamantine piers.
 For Nature ever wakes, but Man may dream—
 This is his glory and strength.

Now does the cloud
 Burst ; and the watcher stoops to the hurricane ;
 Blinded, he hears the tempest shout aloud
 When in the leaping vortex of the rain
 All light is sucked. The billows of the sky
 Sweep onward ever to quell ; the pines go down,
 The river, smitten, as a feudatory
 Bears ruin now herself. Upon the crown
 Of a huge headland at length stayed the storm.

II.

Then from beneath the shelter of an oak
 The man came forth, and saw the sun inform
 The desolate valley with a wizard's stroke ;
 A purple spirit moved about the things
 Oft seen he yet knew not, and fancy's elves
 Shot through the sunbeams on their silvern wings,
 Making the scene unreal as themselves.

He sees amid the shifting smoke of light
 A mountain scarred, uprooted forest trees,
 The blazing Hinnom of the Israelite—
 Water and vale aflame; a world he sees,
 By forces of the world destroyed, and them
 Spent in destroying (as that flower once pluckt
 Of Grecian henbane). 'Tis the diadem,
 He said, of Death! when lo! the viaduct,
 Grave, simple, on its chorded structure strong,
 Rose through the exhalation's fantasy
 Like truth, established, or the steadfast song
 Of one, of peril scornful or to die,
 Undeviating.

And the watcher cried
 It is the bridge of Life; for Man has made
 Sole in this valley and yon prospect wide
 A way for brotherhood; he disobeyed
 The voices of the mountain and the flood,
 The passionate bidding of the mountain winds,
 Which work by conflict—Man of wiser mood
 Is still creating; Nature ever finds
 Her highest beauty in her own disease:
 In shattered rock and troubled watercourse,
 Lightning, and when the cheerless marshes freeze,
 The piercing icicle. Oh, say what source
 All elemental fury far beyond,
 What fount of wisdom planned this granite arch:
 This usefuller promontory, sweeter bond?

III.

And halt! ye hidden forces in your march,
 Ye winds and waters, frost and lightning, stand!
 For I will match you with another might,
 Strong as yourselves, yet pliant to command.
 For it this bridge was reared, and the height
 Of hills made low, or tunnelled craftily;
 For it men pondered till the stars would sink,
 Much giving and much hoping, silently.
 They planned the uncouth engine, and a link

Was forged between the nations. Conquering swords
Have hewn an Empire—and we weep for Rome!
Now is the railway mightier than the lords
Of slaughter, that expands the sway of home.
Almost a poet is the man who binds,
Destroying distance only, and the long ache
Of absence.

Hark! what sound is this that winds
Shrilly along the moor? The echoes wake.
It is the swift train, spearing with the shock
Of Ottoman squadrons on the broken Giaour,
Shot like a fiery torrent from the rock:
Niagaran moment, utterly with power!

A. F. WALLIS.

HOUSEHOLD BUDGETS ABROAD.

V. AUSTRALIA.

BY MRS. B. R. WISE.

a. £600 a Year.

It has been somewhere said that though 'Money does not make happiness, it is difficult, in married life, to be happy without money.' Certainly the question 'How much is necessary for comfort?' opens up a wide field for discussion. Remember poor Rosamond in Miss Edgeworth's well-known tale, and her distress when the silver paper would not go round her filagree basket. Either the basket was too large or the piece of paper too small. By which hangs Mr. Micawber's moral: 'Annual income, twenty pounds; annual expenditure, nineteen six; result, happiness. Annual income, twenty pounds; annual expenditure, twenty pounds ought and sixpence; result, misery.' In trying to estimate the average proportion of expenses to an income in Australia it is very difficult to generalise, since each profession has its own expenses and exactions.

Those who marry on a fixed income are able to arrange their expenditure more easily than persons who belong to professions, where the income varies according to fees. With the fixed income a certain sum can be set aside for savings and investments; while lawyers, doctors, and other professional men find it advisable to leave a margin of at least £100, so that there may be something to fall back on in bad years. A prolonged drought, for instance, will affect all classes of the community; but they suffer most in actual money loss who have no fixed income.

Let us imagine the case of a young couple who marry on £600 a year (a sum which, it must be borne in mind, is equivalent to rather less than £500 in England), and try to ascertain approximately how people who have a certain position to keep up can manage to live on this income in a town like Sydney or Melbourne. Where a man has led a comfortable bachelor life at his club, and a girl been brought up in a luxurious home, with an unlimited dress allowance and occasional trips to Europe, it needs both courage and self-denial to forgo so-called pleasures and settle down in a small house on a smaller income. It says much for human nature

that there are not a few who do this with success. We shall try to show how this is done.

The first consideration is always that of rent. Here let me say that in Australia we have to abandon the theory that one-tenth of the income should be devoted to house rent. Rents are high, and for a suitable house in a pleasant neighbourhood our young couple must be prepared to give at least £70 a year. Certain advantages are worth paying for, so that to take a cheap house, far away from friends and business acquaintances, is not necessarily true economy, because a greater distance from town means higher cab fares and more time spent in going to and from one's work. It should also be recognised that the smaller the society you live in, the more it is advisable to be in and of it; and your friends will not thank you for giving them a long tram ride or a tedious walk whenever they wish to see you. Not half enough care is bestowed on the choice of a house. Otherwise we should know much less of the peculiarly Australian characteristic known as 'removing.' The holy horror with which a house-moving is regarded in England is a contrast to the unpremeditated fashion in which, in Australia, people migrate from one abode to another. With their household goods exposed to the light of day in open carts a house-fitting seems a very trivial affair; for, strangely enough, though large furniture vans can be had, they are seldom used. Moving is at no time a cheap form of amusement, but the cost of carrying furniture away roped, in light carts, is much less than when skilled workmen tactfully bear it off in discreet covered vans. An old resident was heard to say, that among all his Sydney acquaintances, there was only one family occupying the same house in which they lived twenty years ago, when he began his married life. All the same, our young couple will do well to select a house they mean to live in for some time to come. Farther out in the suburbs charming cottages at lower rents are to be had. But, unless you have friends in any particular part, a young wife will find the long, hot summer days very lonely; and as it is she, and not her husband, who spends most time at home, I always maintain that the wife has the first claim for consideration in the choice of a house. There are, of course, cheaper districts in which it would be quite possible to live; but, unless a young couple intend to give up society altogether—which from professional, and perhaps other points of view, is a mistake—it is better to live among your own kind. Rates and taxes are generally paid by the landlord. These

include all municipal rates, which amount to about 1s. 9d. in the pound. One reason for this arrangement is that houses are sublet on short leases, and it is therefore much simpler to have taxes charged in the rent. In a climate like this much depends upon the house and its aspect, because even in this sunny country it is wholesome to have plenty of sun. Accordingly, where £10 or £15 extra rent would give you larger rooms and better ventilation, it will be quite worth while to pay it, especially if this include space for poultry or a tennis-court. But here again all depends on a man's future prospects. Where there is no chance of increased income for several years the lowest possible rent should be given. On the other hand, where people are sure of better times, nothing is easier than to take a house rather above one's means and live quietly, not even furnishing all at once, since by thus looking a little ahead the worry and expense of moving are averted, while the process of expanding slowly as the income increases will be both pleasant and easy. Only the newest houses are at all labour-saving, so that one need not expect to find hot and cold water laid on everywhere. If there be a gas-heater in the bathroom, and a kitchen stove in good repair, and not too ravenous for coal, you will have much to be thankful for. One should also hope for a good copper, some fixed tubs in the laundry, and a sunny yard or garden wherein to hang out the clothes; for in most parts of Australia all the washing is done at home.

It is regrettable that courage alone is not enough to run a small *ménage* successfully. Assuming that two people are young and in love, they cannot, even so, escape the trials of inexperience. The winds may be favourable, and the Sea of Matrimony calm, but the 'Domestic Servant' rocks will inevitably ruffle its surface from time to time. 'I don't mind poverty at all,' said one weeping bride, 'but I'm just terrified of Maria. She can't cook, and I don't know *how* to give her notice!' It is pathetic to think how much unnecessary discord is caused by incompetent servants, who take advantage of a young wife's inexperience. This makes it all the more important that good wages be paid from the first in order to ensure a good class of servant. It is really the best economy in the long run. Servants command higher wages here than in England, but they work harder, and their work is more varied. Their duties, too, are apportioned in quite a different way. For instance, in ordinary households, where two servants are kept, these would consist of a cook-laundress and a house-parlourmaid.

The former has entire charge of the kitchen, besides doing all the family and household washing. This arrangement works much better than might be anticipated, and materially lessens one of the expenses of housekeeping. The highest normal wage for a cook-laundress varies from 14s. to £1 per week; while a house-parlourmaid can get from 12s. to 16s. a week. She must, however, have some knowledge of cooking and general housework, because on Mondays she will take charge of the kitchen while the cook is in the laundry. The young couple on their modest income must be content with a general servant at first, to whom they should give at least 12s. a week. Cheaper servants are to be had, but it always pays in Australia to have the better class of servant. The Australian general servant of experience is a good cook, an excellent laundress, and understands all branches of housework thoroughly; she can often get as much as 15s. a week. Indeed, some people prefer to keep one general servant instead of two others; and it is extraordinary to see how very comfortably a house can be run with only one maid to keep it in order. But this requires management on the part of the mistress, who must be prepared to give judicious help here and there, especially on Mondays. The weekly expense to a small family for washing at home comes to about 1s. a week:

		d.
$\frac{1}{2}$ lb. washing soda	$\frac{1}{2}$
$\frac{1}{2}$ bar washing soap	6
Starch and blue	5
		<hr/>
		11 $\frac{1}{2}$ d.

There will have to be a small laundry bill as well, for a general servant cannot be expected to do up white shirts and many starched things. It is noticeable that house-linen will last much longer when washed at home, with no injurious chemicals; and after a thorough airing in the garden it is so much fresher than when it arrives from the laundry in a cart.

It is to be hoped that a knowledge of cooking be included among a bride's accomplishments. She need not necessarily practise it much, but will find such knowledge invaluable in training servants, and can herself give help when any extra 'diets daint' may be required. I have known young people who kept only one servant for years to give charming little dinners. Each dish had to be placed on the table and helped there; but one cannot expect a *dîner à la Russe* when the same little maid who cooks

must also wait at table. On such occasions the husband must be his own butler, and see to the decanters, &c. If he be wise he will be content to offer his friends whisky and soda, although some good wine should always be kept in the house for special occasions or in case of illness. The guests will do very well without champagne (which one of our ex-Governors declared to be the 'wine of the country'); although, by the way, champagne at private houses can always be relied on in Australia, because the high duty keeps out all that class of wine which the thrifty housewife in England buys by the bottle from 'the grocer round the corner.' The newest theory of taking less food, and eating it very slowly, is admirably adapted to the limitations of a small household, while a good host and hostess can more than atone for any deficiencies in the menu. Was it not said of Madame de Maintenon that her butler whispered to her one day during dinner: 'Another anecdote, Madame, if you please; there is no roast to-day'? How much more cheerful one feels after a simple meal with laughter, than after a long and dull banquet, where it is impossible to avoid eating more than one wants.

Dinners suggest the weekly bills, which we must now examine with care. With beef at 8*d.* per lb. and mutton at 5*d.* per lb. your butcher's bill for a household of three need not be more than 10*s.* In this climate people are better without meat for breakfast, and enough variety can be had by ringing the changes on fish and eggs. Five shillings a week is the least that can be spent on fish; but, made into fish cakes and kedgerree, enough for breakfast and dinner could be managed on that sum. Poultry is too expensive to buy regularly, and there is little game, except what is sent frozen from England and New Zealand. The best plan is to make some arrangement with other families by which poultry can be had from the country once a week. A pair of fowls for Sunday would help to save the butcher's bill, and could be supplemented by a small piece of pressed beef at 4*d.* a pound, which would come in for the Monday's lunch. A competent general servant will be up and at her washtubs by 7 A.M. on Monday morning, and should easily have finished the week's wash and hung out the clothes by noon. This gives her plenty of time to lay the table for lunch, and, after clearing it away, she can begin to iron out some of the smaller things before she dresses for the afternoon. Monday's dinner must be a fairly simple meal: some soup (prepared on Sunday from stock), a fricassée of the chicken, vegetables, and a pudding or

savoury. The ironing should be all done by Wednesday night, and the clothes folded and put away on Thursday morning.

At this stage it would be as well to put down the initial expense of washing at home, which means a small outlay at first, since the best and newest laundry furnishings should be bought, as being more labour-saving :

	£	s.	d.
Mangle	3	15	0
Clothes wringer	14	6	
Washing-board	1	6	
Skirt-board	3	6	
3 flat irons	4	6	
3 dozen clothes pegs			3
Clothes-line	1	6	
	£5	0	9

As tortoisés, in the railway rates, come under the heading of 'insects,' so are clothes-pegs in Australia reckoned among the groceries. This is probably because they have the same disappearing qualities as pins and hairpins.

Our next item is the greengrocer's account, which ought not to be less than 6s. a week, including fruit and vegetables, of which the supply (excepting in times of severe drought) is plentiful and the price moderate. Groceries are the heaviest item of all, and the one which causes most worry to housekeepers. It is a comprehensive item, too, including as it does bacon, butter, eggs, lamp-oil, tea, and coffee ; so we cannot allow less than 30s. for this in the week. The price of bacon varies from 9d. to 1s. 3d. per lb. ; eggs are sometimes 4s. a dozen, so that naturally many people find that it pays to keep fowls. The cost of feeding these is not much. A shilling a week for grain will keep a dozen fowls, if all the house scraps are boiled down and given to them once a day. Should you secure a servant who understands bread-making you are fortunate indeed. Three shillings is enough for your bread bill at the baker's, while if you buy the flour and bake at home it will cost you nearly 4s. a week. This fact gives food for thought, and explains why bought bread is so often sour. Ice must not be forgotten, for it is a necessity, and not a luxury, during eight months of the year. In the summer an enormous amount of food would be wasted unless there were an ice-chest for meat, fish, and other remains, of which excellent breakfast dishes can be made. The most frugal manager must, therefore, not grudge at least 3s. a week for ice. We do not in Australia go in for the iced drinks so dear to Americans, but with-

out ice butter is neither wholesome nor pleasant in the hot weather. The next item of importance is tea. Servants drink tea with all their meals, including dinner, but they do not expect either beer or beer money, even where there are men-servants. The maids, too, wash their own clothes, and therefore receive no laundry allowance. Thus it will be seen that there are many things in Australia which counterbalance the higher wages.

Summarising the figures already given, the weekly bills for eatables amount to about £3 2s. 6d. :

	£	s.	d.
Butcher		10	0
Groceries	1	10	0
Milk		3	6
Baker		3	0
Fish and poultry		10	0
Greengrocer		6	0
	£3	2	6

which makes in all £162 10s. for the year.

Starting with this sum for bare subsistence, the composition of the annual budget has now to be considered. The most important items in this are those of travelling and holidays. The great heat of the summer months in many parts of Australia necessitates some change to a cooler climate : a run up to the mountains if you live by the sea ; a change to the fresh sea breezes for those who live in the dry heat of some up-country towns. Sometimes the summer holiday can be spent in Tasmania, in delightful farm-houses among fruit orchards, where living is so cheap that it helps to counterbalance the expense of two days' steamer fare. The ordinary boarding-house charge in New South Wales is £2 2s. per week for adults and half for children ; but in more remote districts the terms are lower, though the cost of getting there is higher. However, as one anxious parent was heard to remark with vigour, 'Whether people can afford it or not, they should *always* take a summer holiday.' Thirty pounds would give two persons a few weeks at Christmas, and another £15 could be spread over the rest of the year for those Saturday-to-Monday trips which are so essential to a man who works hard throughout the year. For those who are lucky enough to have invitations the expensive luxury of staying with friends can be indulged in. I say 'expensive,' because although Australian hospitality is proverbial, the enormous distances preclude much intercourse in a general way. A passing stranger of my acquaintance was once delighted by a cordial request to visit a station,

which, without thinking of the distance, he accepted ; but when he arrived at his destination after a five days' journey, he found that he had spent £10. He furthermore disappointed his host, who had expected him to stop at least a month, by announcing that his mail steamer, which would not wait for him, was leaving in a week. He departed in two days with a sounder knowledge of geography and new notions of the duration of a 'short visit.' Our busiest men take the most homœopathic holidays, on the principle that a great change for a short time does as much good as a little change for a long time. In speaking of visits it should be noted that the custom of 'tipping' is not the same tax on visitors as it is in countries where wages are lower. Indeed, in private houses an offer of money is often firmly but politely refused. In hotels, of course, tips are expected, but they are on a moderate scale.

It will be found hard to keep down expenses for amusements; for where society is small there are numerous dinners, balls, and other functions. It needs a brave woman to go always in trams to evening entertainments; but firmness must be shown on this subject, and cabs resorted to only on rainy days or wet nights. The tariff for cabs is 1s. per quarter of an hour; but in other ways there are unusual facilities for going out at night. Special trams and steamers are put on whenever there are large public or charity balls; and, indeed, we use the tramcars almost as gaily as the Americans. The seating accommodation is so good that the most fragile evening dresses do not suffer; but when there are deluges of rain it is the better economy to take a cab, and not risk ruining one's best clothes. Young people should not refuse invitations, and a newly married couple are always expected to go out a good deal. So £10 must be set aside for carriages and cabs, and not more. Out of this sum it will be quite possible to contrive some theatres and concerts. With stalls and dress-circle seats for 5s., and concerts all the year round at popular prices, a young couple can get a good deal of enjoyment for a very small sum of money. A young couple need not entertain, but a man should always feel that he can ask a friend to dine quietly at his home, just as one woman would ask another to afternoon tea. It is better to economise in some other way rather than allow no margin in the weekly bills for hospitality to friends. There is no need to order expensive luxuries or to have a lavish display of flowers. Simple, well-cooked food is good enough for anyone; and no one in Australia need be without fresh flowers. An unexpected guest

ought only to give trouble to the extent of laying an extra plate at table, with, possibly, the addition of a savoury or *entrée* to the dinner. One bride had a list of what she called 'emergency dishes,' any one of which could be prepared and sent to table at very short notice. There is a very old precedent for this, as, in his 'Paradise Lost,' Milton shows us Eve occupied in a similar way when 'Raphael, the sociable spirit,' came unexpectedly to lunch one day with Adam and his 'fair spouse' in the Garden of Eden:

. . . with dispatchful looks in haste
She turns, on hospitable thoughts intent
What choice to choose for delicacy best,
What order, so contrived as not to mix
Tastes not well join'd, inelegant; but bring
Taste after taste upheld with kindest change:
Bestirs her then

It is to be hoped that most people begin their married life with a good supply of house-linen. Nothing appeals to one's 'house-pride' like rows of snowy linen, fragrant with lavender, and the relations and friends of an engaged couple should remember that the larger the supply at first, the less it will cost to keep it in order. For the repairing and replenishing of an average supply £10 should be enough. The linen must, however, be regularly 'looked over and mended; and if neither the mistress nor her maid be expert darners, a good needlewoman should be engaged by the day, for nothing spoils linen like careless mending. The exquisite darns and patchings of our grandmothers rather enhanced than otherwise the beauty of old linen. And while speaking of repairs, I must not forget the replacing of glass and china, which, unless great discretion be exercised, will be a serious consideration in the house expenses. The stock of china should be looked over once a week, and the maid instructed to report any breakage at once. Indeed, the old-fashioned custom of washing delicate glass and china at table would probably save a good deal of damage, but in these days of telephones there is no time for this. Let us allow another £10 to cover breakages and the renewing of kitchen ware, because, although most people nowadays use enamel ware, iron-mongery and china cost more in Australia than in England. We have not yet touched on the all-important question of dress and personal expenditure. Here again so much depends on individual capabilities. A girl who is clever with her fingers can make money go twice as far as another. I allot £60 for the wife's dress allow-

ance, which includes pocket-money and postage stamps. This does not give much margin for dress; but the trousseau ought to help out a dress allowance for quite two years, especially if the bride follow the sensible innovation of not having all her dresses made up at first. Quite skilful dressmakers go out by the day, and charge from 3s. 6d. to 5s. per day. The average prices for dresses and tailor-made frocks are higher than the average prices in London, but they can be absolutely relied on, while cheaper things can always be had at the cheaper shops. A certain amount of a dress allowance goes to the cleaner, for light clothes are much worn, and cleaning is rather more expensive than in London, owing to the higher wages. The wife must also contrive her club subscription out of this allowance; but as yet club life for women does not exist in Australia, though efforts are being made to start ladies' clubs in some of the towns, and so far they promise to be a success. The husband may be allowed another £60 a year for his dress and personal expenses, and from this he must manage all his club subscriptions. It is essential that a man in Australia belong to at least one club. Clubs play a much larger part in the social life of the Colonies than they do in England. All of them are residential, and passing strangers of good repute can easily be made honorary members, so that most unmarried travellers stay at clubs in preference to hotels. A professional man, accordingly, who leads any sort of social life both receives and gives hospitality at a club much more frequently than is done in England. Clubs are also the mid-day rendezvous for lunch of all classes of professional and business men. Let us hope that the husband will also belong to one of the golf clubs. If this cannot be done out of his dress allowance, it might be saved from the wine bill.

For charities about £10 should be set aside, and it will be very hard to keep within this limit. This must include money spent at bazaars and sales of work, which are apt to make a big drain on an unprepared purse. If every young couple were to choose one hospital or institution, and subscribe steadily to that one, it would be much better than so much indiscriminate charity. In Australia a man is often called upon to 'lend' £5 or £10 to an acquaintance, or even to a perfect stranger who has known better days, a request which he cannot well refuse to a friend, but which puts a heavy tax upon a small income. So that often by the end of a year people are surprised to find what a large sum has melted away in loans of this sort.

HOUSEHOLD BUDGETS ABROAD—AUSTRALIA. 641

Insurance is much more general in Australia than in most countries, and endowment and time policies are favourite forms of investment for persons of small incomes. Indeed, it is probably true that people out here insure rather above the standard of their incomes, because, since all Australian policies are non-forfeitable, and every company freely makes loans upon them, the difficulty of paying premiums out of fluctuating incomes is not so seriously felt. On an income of £600 a man would insure for two or three times that amount.

Medical expenses next claim our attention. We have set aside £30 for doctor, &c., which, indeed, is rather a small average amount. The Australian calls in his medical man so much more freely than the Englishman that the general practitioner has a busy time, and most families will own up to a big doctor's bill. We have now arrived at a tolerably accurate estimate of the yearly expenditure, which is as follows :

	£	s.	d.
Rent (including taxes ¹).	90	0	0
Coal	7	10	0
Wages (one servant)	31	4	0
Provisions	162	10	0
Wine, spirits, and mineral waters	24	0	0
Holidays and travelling	45	0	0
Amusements (cabs, book subscriptions, &c.)	10	0	0
Husband's allowance	60	0	0
Wife's allowance	60	0	0
Gas and wood	12	0	0
Repairs	20	0	0
Doctor and dentist	30	0	0
Charities	5	0	0
Ice	4	16	0
Telephone (annual subscription)	5	0	0
Insurance (for £1,000)	30	0	0
Sundries	3	0	0
	£600	0	0

A telephone may seem unnecessary when every pound has to be considered; but where all the tradespeople have them, and are in the habit of ringing up daily for the morning orders, it is most inconvenient not to have a telephone. Invitations to dine are often sent through them, and it is an invaluable method of asking friends to lunch or tea at short notice. All the suburban cabstands have a telephone, so that on wet nights, or after a 'Bridge' evening, it is always easy to ring up and get a cab at any

¹ This includes income-tax, which is 6d. in the £, with certain exemptions.

time. Telephones save money in stationery and postage stamps; but if one's time be of any value, those friends who ring up for conversation and amusement should be sternly repressed from the first. The subscription, as will be seen, is very moderate. In making out the budget it was found necessary to reduce the £10 for charities to £5. This is a small sum, but it can be supplemented by judicious gifts of clothes and food. A young couple will not have much spare money for the first year; experience has to be bought, and, no matter how sound may be one's theories, they have all to be put to the test.

The above prices are all taken from the best shops, and I have given the highest average price for meat, &c. With care and pruning less could be spent, but it really does not pay for the better class of people to deal at cheap shops, and it runs away with a lot of time. I have known people get up early and go to market, returning in triumph in a cab filled with cheap provisions, quite forgetting to set down the price of the cab against these economies. The allowance for wine may seem too high, but this is to some extent unavoidable in a warm climate, where the hospitable habits of English ancestors are still observed, and it will be found difficult to spend much less.

The above table could easily be adjusted to an income of £800 or £1,000 by giving a higher house rent and by keeping two servants. The holiday allowance should also be increased. The amounts here put down are taken from several family budgets, which are curiously alike in the items of rent, provisions, and wages. Where individual tastes differ most is in holidays, doctor's bills, and insurance. It may be the effect of climate, but in Australia there is not the same tendency to 'save up for a rainy day' which is impressed on English children from their earliest copybooks. Perhaps this may be owing to the fact that out here the rainy day is our hope and our salvation; it is the rainy day that enables us to save up for those too fine days when for weeks, months, and in some places years, no rain falls.

Where there are children to be considered in the family budget it complicates matters a good deal. Most children droop in the summer heat, and to take them away for two or three months is a serious drain on an income. Many people let their houses during the summer, and go with their families to the mountains; but the husband cannot as a rule spare more than one month away, and will have to live at the club or in rooms if the home be let. As many families cannot afford to keep more than two maids, some

mothers find it the best plan to have a really good nurse for the baby, and a general servant for other work, rather than keep two maids and an inexperienced nurse-girl. But it is not possible to keep three maids on less than £800 a year, and while the children are young a good deal must be sacrificed to them. It costs very little to live in the country, where everything can be grown on the premises, and the only expenses are those of dress, doctors, and travelling. But I have only been dealing in the preceding pages with life in the capital cities.

Social life in Australia is singularly free from money snobbishness. So long as you are well dressed, no one will care whether you live on £500 or £1,500, which is a healthy and comforting state of things. If you are poor, there is no place where poverty so little cuts you off from social pleasures; while those who have to economise do not seem to find it the same dreary series of privations that it is apt to be in England. The penny tram will take you to Government House as safely as a hansom cab, and a great deal more safely than a motor-car, which latter have hard work to climb the steep hills in which Sydney abounds. The necessaries of life may be dear to buy, but so much is thrown in for nothing that those who are brave enough to begin life out here on a small income are not to be pitied. But the basket must never be too large for the silver paper to cover it. It must be admitted that the Australians are not a saving people. To save only in insurance, and have a bare £3 for emergencies, would seem to the thrifty Scotch or English housewife to be a threatening of the workhouse. The Australian lives in the sunshine, puts by in insurance more than he can afford, spends his income, and gambles his savings on the racecourse or a mining venture. If he loses, he has no more to spend; but if, as often happens, he 'makes a bit,' his wife has more jewellery, or his friends get better dinners; while if the 'punch' be very good indeed, he moves into a larger house. It seems a careless, reckless life, but there is some sound philosophy beneath it all, and the men who lead it can face misfortune, when misfortune comes, as bravely as most others.

b. £150 a Year.

We can only realise that 'one half of the world does not know how the other half lives,' when we endeavour to make even a rough

estimate of the weekly and yearly expenses of a class to which we do not belong. We can frankly discuss our own home budgets with friends who share our difficulties in making both ends meet, but the moment that we seek for information from those whose incomes are either much less or much greater than our own we do not meet on common ground.

It is, moreover, impossible to generalise without being open to the charge of inaccuracy, since one case so little resembles another, that the expenses of a single family are seldom typical of any class. Thus, I have been told by several working men that '£2 10s. a week will keep a man, his wife, and three children nicely.' But in order to do this the work must be continuous, the wife a good manager, and the husband steady and sober. It is seldom, alas! that all these requisites concur. Working men of the artisan class, who have had experience of life in England as well as in Australia, say that in spite of the higher wages it really costs them more to live out here. That is to say, they do not find it any easier to save. The conditions of life are, however, much pleasanter, and there is less privation and misery for those who do work.

Most families keep no accounts. They know how much they spend in house rent, and that is about all; so that it is only by dint of many inquiries that the weekly expenses can be ascertained. The wife generally knows how much she is in the habit of spending on any item each week, but it is never put down on paper. Here is the money, and there the things required. It balances somehow.

A man who is earning regularly £150 in the year can afford to pay about 10s. a week for his house. Rents vary from 8s. to 12s. 6d., according to the distance from town and the desirability of the locality. For any of these prices a man can find nice cottages, near to tramlines, with three rooms, besides kitchen, bathroom, laundry, and a yard. Such a class of dwelling is to be found anywhere in town or suburbs. A man must live near his work, and if this take him into town he may have to pay a higher rent and have a rather less airy house. But the immediate society of one's fellow-creatures makes up for a good deal.

In a house of this size one bag of coal at 1s. 3d. and sixpenny-worth of wood will keep the kitchen fire going for a week, and leave enough over to heat the copper for the week's washing, besides an occasional fire in a sitting-room. All the washing is done at home by the wife, and the cost of laundry materials is included in the weekly grocer's bill.

The daily marketing is not a long business. The wife simply runs over to the nearest butcher in the course of a morning and buys two pounds of either beef or mutton, which are both to be had for 4*d.* a pound. She also buys enough potatoes and other vegetables for the needs of the day, and there her shopping ends; for milk is left at the door, and the baker calls daily with bread. The bread bill is usually about 3*s.* a week. In this particular case baker's bread is supplemented by scones and home-made cakes, but unfortunately many wives have neither the time nor the inclination for cooking of this sort. The milk bill is about 1*s.* 2*d.* a week; and in addition to this a tin of Swiss milk is bought every week, to be used for puddings and early-morning tea.

On Saturdays, late in the afternoon, when all the house is swept and garnished, the wife will set forth to lay in her stock of provisions for the week. The husband may or may not accompany her—probably not; and the eldest boy or girl generally helps to carry the basket. The grocer is doing a thriving trade this afternoon, and many things are to be bought here. For the week's lighting one pound of candles will be required, which cost 6*d.*, and a quart of oil for 3½*d.* Then the wife buys threepennyworth of cheese, a pennyworth of curry powder, 2 lb. of sugar for 5*d.*, 1 lb. of flour (for scones and cakes), 1 lb. of biscuits at 4*d.*; 1 lb. of tea, 1*s.*; 2 lb. of butter, 1*s.* 6*d.*; six eggs for 10*d.*, and a tin of condensed milk, 5*d.* If there is enough soap to last the week, that completes the grocery purchases for that day, unless treacle, honey, or jam for the children's tea be required. The grocer's bill for a week is always about 12*s.* 6*d.*, and this includes, as we have seen, candles, eggs, butter, and sometimes a little bacon. Bacon is not much eaten by working people. It can be had as low as 5*d.* a pound, but of a very inferior quality, and all the better kinds are much dearer. Its place is taken by tinned salmon or fresh meat. Some housewives disapprove strongly of giving children any tinned meats, and these have a higher butcher's bill and a lower grocer's bill than their neighbours. On the Saturday a leg of mutton for 2*s.* is bought; this provides the Sunday dinner and lasts till Tuesday. The butcher's account for the week is never more than 5*s.* 4*d.* A visit to the greengrocer ends the evening's shopping, and the usual purchases are 1½ dozen bananas at 4*d.* a dozen, and a dozen apples at the same price. In summer fruit can be bought very cheaply, but apples and bananas are the usual stand-by in winter. There is no need to buy any fish, for this husband spends most of Sunday

fishing, and often catches quite a good supply. It costs him nothing, for the family live within a walk of the sea; but many families who have the same advantage do not avail themselves of it. Instead of going to the seashore to fish they prefer to buy stale sardines or reduced tins of salmon.

The question of dress is always serious. Good clothes, which wear well, can only be bought at a price which few working people can afford. The cheap clothes they do afford themselves are inferior in quality and never last long. Some wives know this so well that by making great economies they manage to save up and buy good working clothes for their husbands. With the majority, however, a favourite plan is that known as the 'time-payment system.' A 'collector' goes round to all the small houses, and sells 'orders' on various large firms. His commission is really paid by all these poor people. For instance, a woman buys an order for £3. For this she pays 6s. down, 3s. of which is 'commission,' and for this she receives no return, while the other 3s. reduces her further liability to £2 17s. Of this she pays off 6s. a week till all is paid, and meantime she goes into town and can get whatever she wants in the way of clothes, each item being checked from her 'order.' Orders can be had for any sum from £1 upwards. I am told that a £3 order will clothe a mother, a full-grown boy, and two little girls for five months. 'And do you also buy boots on that system?' 'Oh, no,' was the reply. 'We find that boots bought on the time-payment system do not wear well, so I have to buy them separately.' It is curious that it does not seem to occur to people that the same theory applies to other articles of dress, and that 6s. a week could be saved up and spent on better clothes. I gather that a man who really works hard cannot be clothed on the time payment system, but requires something more substantial. For a suit made to order he pays from £3 to £4 10s., according to the quality of the material. His boots cost at least 12s. 6d. a pair. So that there is not much left for the wife to dress on. Most women own a sewing-machine and make their own clothes with it; while the younger ones can be dressed in the cast-off clothes of the elder girls. In this way the younger children are dressed at very little expense. A mother will often go shabby herself in order that her children may be neatly dressed for school. For each child who goes to school 3d. a week is paid. Payment is optional, but in most cases the parents prefer to pay if they can afford it.

Sixpence a week paid to a 'lodge' includes doctor's attendance

and medicine, but more is charged if any one of the family suffers from a chronic ailment.

Some allowance must be made for beer and spirits, and this usually comes to about 2s. a week. Women always drink tea. The amount spent on tobacco varies a good deal in each household. Where a man takes no beer he sometimes spends as much as £7 10s. in the year on tobacco, but as a rule 2s. a week will cover the extent of his smoking.

Under the heading of amusements come the dances held by the numerous clubs and lodges, to which the elder sons often go. These dances take place two or three times in the week, and the charge is 1s. for each person. Holidays and excursions for a family of five will come to about £5 in the year. Very little saving is done as a rule. It depends on the wife's management whether she can put by something in the savings bank yearly. Man is not a saving animal, and the husbands generally spend all their earnings over and above the living expenses. Roughly, then, the expenses of the family we have been taking as an instance come out as follows :

	£	s.	d.
Income	150	0	0
Rent	26	0	0
Housekeeping	68	10	0
Travelling	5	0	0
Amusements and holidays	5	0	0
Doctor and dentist	2	6	0
Tobacco	5	0	0
Beer and spirits	5	0	0
Fuel and light	7	0	0
Dress (for man and wife)	12	0	0
School bills	1	0	0
Insurance	3	0	0
Cost of children	5	0	0
Savings	5	4	0
	£150	0	0

The following budgets were obtained by drawing up some forms and having them sent to various families living in Sydney and the suburbs. No names were to be mentioned, and those who did not care to fill them up were asked to pass the paper on to neighbours. It must be admitted that they were not all well received. In some cases the papers were regarded with suspicion, as they were thought to herald some new and insidious form of taxation. Others

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wrote and said they could not answer the questions as they kept no account of what they spent. But the tables given here are filled up in nearly every detail, and are all sent in by people belonging to the artisan class.

TABLE A.

	£	s.	d.
Income	175	0	0
Rent	36	0	0
Housekeeping	56	0	0
Travelling	11	0	0
Amusements and holidays	5	0	0
Doctor	1	1	0
Dentist	3	0	0
Tobacco	2	15	0
Beer and spirits	5	0	0
Dress (for man and wife)	15	0	0
Lighting and fuel	5	10	0
Insurances	11	0	0
Subscriptions	1	10	0
Cost of children	5	0	0
School bills	1	10	0
	£154	11	0

The weekly expenses which go towards the housekeeping account are as follows :

	£	s.	d.
Butcher	5	0	0
Baker	1	9	0
Milk	2	0	0
Groceries	6	6	0
Fish	1	0	0
Greengrocer	3	9	0
	£1	0	0

This budget evidently comes from a well-to-do family, and the husband presumably belongs to a 'lodge,' which will account for the doctor's bill being so small. The husband's trade is not given, but he seems to be an abstemious man, and this may explain why there is so large a cash balance left over at the end of the year. Travelling expenses and amusements are a characteristic item of an Australian family budget. 'Amusements' include the wholesome open-air picnics taken by the whole family, either by train, tram, or boat, according to the season, on the numerous holidays that occur in this country. The fares alone for a man, his wife and three children, will mount up to some pounds in the course of a year, even when the outing is conducted with strict economy.

HOUSEHOLD BUDGETS ABROAD—AUSTRALIA. 649

The long, hot summer days, which are so conducive to out-of-door life, are a very different matter when the family is shut up within the four walls of a tiny house, with the sun beating down, and no ice to keep the water cool, and no dainty dishes to tempt the capricious appetite of an ailing child. Should the summer be unusually trying the wife will, if she belong to the country, or to an inland town, take the children away to stop some weeks with her mother. In no other way can they afford to leave their homes. This particular family save an unusually large sum in insurances. They also have a small vegetable garden and keep fowls; otherwise their provision bills would be much higher. A thrifty wife is supposed to be an inestimable boon to a man in any walk of life, but among the poorer people thrift means more than mere comfort, for on it hinges the happiness of the home and the health of the children. It must be borne in mind that poor people pay much less for their food than do the rich. The custom of doing their own marketing and paying cash (when they are able) saves time and trouble to the shopmen, and enables them to charge much lower prices than they could to their wealthier customers, who run up long accounts. Where another would pay 8d. a pound for beef, the wife of a working man can get the same thing for 4d. And this is not for an inferior quality of goods. The Australian working man expects to be well fed, so that meat and vegetables must be of the best. The wife has, of course, some knowledge of cooking, but her range is limited, and the family generally live on roast and grilled meat. A certain philanthropic lady once tried to give lessons in cooking to some of the women, but her recipes were treated with great contempt, the wives declaring that they could never get their husbands to eat such rubbish.

TABLE B.

Income	£	s.	d.
	167	0	0
Rent	39	0	0
Housekeeping	64	16	0
Travelling	5	4	0
Amusements and holidays	5	0	0
Doctor and dentist	2	10	0
Beer and spirits	7	16	0
Dress (for man and wife)	10	15	0
Fuel and light	6	0	0
Cost of children	3	10	0
Subscriptions	5	4	0
	£149	15	0

650 HOUSEHOLD BUDGETS ABROAD—AUSTRALIA.

Weekly Bills:

	£	s.	d.
Butcher	4	6	
Baker	1	9	
Milk	1	9	
Groceries	7	6	
Fish	1	0	
Eggs and butter	2	3	
Greengrocer	4	3	

£1 3 0

We have here what seems to be a surplus of £17 5s., and no mention of what is done with it. It is most unlikely that such a sum is laid by every year. This may have been an unusually prosperous one, and the balance would in that case go into the savings bank. No money is spent in tobacco, and there is a large drink bill, but all the other items are very similar to the preceding Table. The number of children is not given, but there cannot be more than three. The 'subscriptions' are probably to some club or 'lodge.'

TABLE C.

	£	s.	d.
Income	180	0	0
Rent	41	0	0
Housekeeping	84	4	0
Travelling	6	9	0
Amusements and holidays	5	0	0
Doctor and dentist			Nil
Tobacco	3	17	0
Beer and spirits	5	0	0
Dress (for man and wife)	15	0	0
Insurance	2	10	0
School bills	5	0	0
Savings in the year	12	0	0

£180 0 0

Weekly Bills:

	£	s.	d.
Butcher	8	0	
Baker	3	6	
Milk	3	0	
Groceries	15	0	
Fish	1	0	
Greengrocer	3	0	

£1 13 6

There is a slight discrepancy here, as, if the weekly bills come to £1 13s. 6d., the housekeeping money for the year will amount to £87 2s., and this does not give a saving of £12 in the year.

HOUSEHOLD BUDGETS ABROAD—AUSTRALIA. 651

In this family are four children (mentioned in a footnote), but evidences of them are also to be seen in the butcher's and grocer's bills. It is a characteristic budget, however, and seems to have been filled in with some optimism. A man with a wife and four children cannot always hope to get through the year without a doctor, yet no provision seems to be made for him.

Here is our last budget, and a pathetic one :

TABLE D.

	£	s.	d.
Income	104	0	0
Rent	23	0	0
Housekeeping	55	10	0
Travelling	3	0	0
Amusements and holidays	Nil		
Doctor and dentist	Nil		
Tobacco	2	0	0
Beer and spirits	5	0	0
Fuel and light	5	0	0
Dress (for man and wife)	8	0	0
School bills	2	0	0
Insurances	Nil		
Savings	Nil		
	£103	10	0
Weekly Bills:	£	s.	d.
Butcher	7	0	
Baker	2	0	
Milk	1	6	
Groceries	6	6	
Eggs and butter	1	6	
Greengrocer	1	6	
	£1	0	0

We cannot but wonder that 'nil' is written so despairingly opposite the entries for amusement, insurance and savings, with a balance of only 10s. when the year's expenses have been met. There are three children, and one thinks sadly of their life in a tiny house, with no amusements or holidays. It may, perhaps, occur to the reader that less could be spent on beer when so little is saved. The husband's work may not be of a permanent nature, and if he be out of employment, even for a few weeks, it can be imagined into what a condition of distress this will throw his wife and children. Almost the only way in which people circumstanced like these are can save at all is by taking a lodger or two; and here,

again, all depends on the wife's management and her capabilities for making the home comfortable.

Where the Australian working-man's wife fails most is in the rearing of her babies. And why? One glance at the above Tables will show that the milk item is very small compared with the other bills. Milk is almost the only article of food that is no cheaper for the poor, and therefore they are apt to economise in it most. By way of making up for this the babies get an ample share of whatever their elders may be having: bacon, cheese, sardines; nothing is grudged to them, and in consequence child and infant mortality is great. No doubt the mothers do not realise the importance of milk as a food; there seems so little in it, and it is some trouble to prepare; while half a banana will keep a baby quiet for a long time. A great deal of meat is eaten in Australia. It is said by medical men that children, in particular, would be better with little or no meat, but it is no doubt much easier to grill some steak or bake a joint rather than contrive a tempting and satisfying meal with plenty of vegetables and farinaceous food.

Fish is seldom bought. It should be a staple article of diet, but the price is too high for most families to afford it. A large quantity of tinned food, especially salmon, is consumed, even in the towns, while up the country families often live entirely on tinned food. This is not the most wholesome way of living, especially when the daily papers so often have to report cases of ptomaine poisoning; but in the remote back-blocks, where drays with fresh provisions come once a week, or less, there is no alternative. In the cities people have not that excuse, and an extraordinary amount of tinned goods are sold among the working classes. This explains why they have such large grocer's bills. Australia badly needs a cooking crusade. The children would be healthier, the death-rate lower, and the public-houses emptier if simple and scientific cooking were thoroughly understood all over the country. Happily, it is now being taught in the public schools, and a recent innovation has ordained that in some of the gaols all female prisoners serving sentences of more than a week are to be taught some simple cooking. The plan works well, and promises to be a great success. If the poor, overworked wives could only understand how much a knowledge of cooking would lighten their labours the task of reform would be easier.

Tough meat badly cooked has a brutalising effect on man. Even Dr. Johnson, who was by no means fastidious, complained

of food which was 'Ill-fed, ill-killed, ill-kept, and ill-dressed.' In one case a husband returned to his home very tired and asked his wife for a drink. She gave him some milk out of a hair-oil bottle. The subsequent proceedings led them before a magistrate, who decided that the husband could plead 'extenuating circumstances.'

In order to obtain a really correct estimate of what it costs a working man to live in Australia the average of not less than three years' expenses should be taken. Work varies according to the prosperity of the seasons, and a steady workman is liable to be out of work from time to time through no fault of his own because, in a new country, bad times make themselves quickly felt among the poorer classes. Unfortunately, it has only been possible to get accounts of the year's expenditure, but the above tables may give some idea of how people live in Australia.

A FALSE START.

I.

AT intervals all through his day-long journey from Arranard to Dublin Edmund Blake wondered what had possessed him to undertake such a commission, but he could not account for it more satisfactorily than by ascribing it to the way in which his presence of mind habitually deserted him on the rare occasions when he accidentally fell in with an acquaintance. Sometimes it had thus betrayed him, a solitary and unsociable bachelor, into rash acceptances of invitations, out of which he afterwards scrambled lamely and lyingly, if at all; sometimes, as now, it entangled him in engagements whence he could devise no means of escape whatever. He had suddenly met at Ogreine Post-office his aunt Emily, who lived at a safe distance away beyond Shanrone, and, because she asked him to dinner, he had hurriedly announced, what happened to be a true and sufficient excuse, his immediate departure for Dublin on business. Then she had counted her change more than once while he bought his stamps, and at the end of their transactions had made her request. It related to one Anne Millen, her former housemaid, who had been poorly left a widow with a little boy, and had now fallen into hopelessly bad health. She had written from Dublin that she had a good chance of admission into the Incurable Hospital, only how could she be leaving Charlie to run wild about the streets, or get himself shut up in the workhouse or reformatory? Whereupon Mrs. Blake had offered to board the child out with some decent family in her own neighbourhood, and Mrs. Millen had thankfully agreed to the plan, in the way of which only one obstacle stood—the difficulty of transporting Charlie to Arranard. His mother wrote that he was too little and small entirely to be travelling on the train alone, and, as no escort seemed to be forthcoming, the arrangement remained impracticable. But now, said Edmund's aunt, if Edmund would not mind finding Mrs. Millen's lodgings when he was coming home, and just putting the child into the train at the Dublin terminus, and seeing that he changed rightly at the different junctions, it would be a great charity. Mrs.

Millen's address was 4 Dobbryn Court, Lundy Alley, a low, out-of-the-way place, she feared.

Mr. Blake found, after some dismal wandering through a frosty November fog, that this description suited No. 4 Dobbryn Court exactly enough. The spacious, well-proportioned house had fallen with the fortunes of its neighbourhood, and was now let in tenements. Its broad, shallow-stepped staircase had lost its elaborate balustrade, and was rapidly becoming a dangerous and dirty ladder. Far up it, a wide door with blackened silver plates admitted him into a bleak room, where a marble chimney-piece, intricately carved and cracked, surmounted a fireless grate, and a richly garlanded ceiling looked down on a bare floor, in the middle of which the most conspicuous object was a large sooty kettle. Mrs. Finny, its proprietress, had stepped up with the loan of it to Mrs. Millen, who was short of coal, as she explained to Mr. Blake, and of almost everything else, as he inferred from the aspect of herself and her apartment. That she would not want for anything long was likewise clearly evident, and when Mr. Blake told his errand, she seemed at first to waver between a wish to keep Charlie until the last, and a wish to see him start on the way to provision and protection. Perceiving this, Mrs. Finny spoke out her opinion frankly :

'Deed then, Mrs. Millen, it's very wrong you'd be doin' to not take your chance of gettin' yourself into that hospital. Sure, now, it's delightful. I was in it meself one day, a couple of year ago, seein' me cousin's wife that went there in a deep decline, and you wouldn't believe the comfort she said she had in it. But wid me own eyes I seen her aitin' her dinner, and it brought up to her on a little round tray, wid a grand white fringed cloth, if you please, and everything as iligant as it could stick. Oranges, she said, they'd be givin' her, or anything else she'd take and fancy. The finest in the land might be contint to be gettin' their deaths in the likes of such a place, and bedad, it's the happy woman the Lord's intendin' you to be, Mrs. Millen, if it's to the Incurables you're goin'. Very thankful you had a right to be, ma'am, instead of talkin' foolish about not partin' wid the child, that's ne'er a chance in the world here, when you're away, except goin' to loss about the streets learnin' every manner of villainy.'

'There isn't a better child in Ireland than Charlie, the crathur,' said Mrs. Millen. 'Where are you, sonny? Come and spake to the gentleman—I thought he was in it just this minyit.'

'He's apt to ha' slipt out on you unbeknownst,' said Mrs. Finny. 'Och, no—sure, there he is, warmin' himself behind th' ould kettle.' With that Mr. Blake became aware of two eyes shining over the flaky black lid, and Mrs. Finny presently pulled struggling into view the rest of their owner, a very small shock-headed urchin, whose garments hung on and off him in large rectangular tatters, like loose slates, and whose countenance, as far as grime and elf-locks permitted observation, expressed a mixture of anger and alarm. Mr. Blake, on his part, gazed aghast at this hopeful travelling companion.

Next morning, however, when they met by appointment at the railway terminus, he would hardly have recognised the child had it not been for the presence of Mrs. Finny acting as convoy, so transformed was Charlie's appearance by a process of combing and clipping, and a whole suit of the sort technically termed 'reach-me-downs,' the funds for which Mr. Blake had supplied. Charlie's mother had watched his departure with heart-broken pride, and a feeling that life contained more precious things than any Incurable Hospital, if only she could have kept a hold of them. During the long day's journey, his conduct quite corresponded with his new air of respectability. Hour after hour he sat silent and still, save for such movements as were occasioned by the consumption of a huge twopenny bun with which he was presented on the way, and at which he worked with successful perseverance. As they drew near their destination Mr. Blake began to reflect that after all he had not been much the worse for the gossoon's society. But a few stations short of Arranard, the stout priest who had hitherto shared their compartment alighted, leaving them alone, and they were no sooner moving on again than Charlie rapidly drew forth from his pocket a slender brown purse, which he handed to Mr. Blake, saying: 'I was only waitin' for that one to quit. There might be the price of me ticket in it.'

'Did your mother give it to you?' Mr. Blake asked, surprised at this development of resources.

'Sure, not at all,' said Charlie; 'I got it off an ould gintleman was readin' a picture-book on the stall at the place where you gave me the cake. It's the first one ever I took, unless an ould hankercher that wasn't any good. But it was me new coat gave me a great chance this time. They wouldn't ever let me be standin' so close alongside them before. That's the way Dick Molloy has the luck; his clothes is oncommon dacint. I wisht

he'd just seen me grabbin' this,' Charlie added, regretfully, as if missing the crown of his triumph. 'Wudn't you thry what's in it, sir? You might get a pound-note. I only squinted inside it yet. Maybe I'll have another chance, if there's a crowd on the platform and we gettin' out.'

Horror grew upon Mr. Blake along with these revelations, which were made in a tone of exulting confidence. He stared blankly at the complacent pickpocket opposite, and then searched hastily through the purse for some clue to the address of its lawful owner, but, finding only a few small coins, flung it disgustedly out of the window. Charlie uttered a howl. 'Och, there was shillins in it; I seen a couple at all events. You done right to be throwin' away the purse, for fear the peelers would be gettin' it on you; but now you're after losin' the bit of money and everythin'.' He burst into tears of bitter mortification and disappointment. To see the fruits of his sweet first success thus wantonly destroyed was indeed heart-rending, especially as he had handed them over in all their freshness, even unreckoned, being moved by a sentiment of profound gratitude towards the patron who had showered such unprecedented benefits upon him, culminating in that prodigious bun.

'You young miscreant,' said Mr. Blake, 'I've as good a mind as ever I had in my life just to give you in charge to the police the minute we get to Arranard.'

This threat froze Charlie into speechless terror. Into what fatal snare had he fallen? It had never for a moment occurred to him that this princely bestower of splendid clothing and sumptuous refreshments, who was treating him to a more wonderful excursion than ever he had imagined, could possibly have any affinity with the rest of the respectable world, whose proceedings towards him had been so completely different, and whose allies were the still more awful 'polis.' But now it appeared that, whatever he might have done, the stranger was in league with them all, and as ready as any of them to invoke those horrible powers. As the train swept past a little lamp-lit station without stopping, Charlie caught a glimpse of two helmeted figures on the platform, and shrank back into his corner, meditating the possibility of a desperate bolt for freedom when they reached Arranard.

Meanwhile, Mr. Blake, though much less overwhelmingly discomposed, felt quite seriously concerned about this thank-

offering. He was subject to severe attacks of scrupulousness, and one of these now supervened upon considering the criminal propensities manifested by the person whom he had been the means of importing into his parish. It seemed clear to him that he could not justifiably allow a trained Dublin thief to be domesticated, without a word of warning, in a family whose property and morals might alike suffer from the presence of such an inmate. Yet to speak that word, with the effect, perhaps, of further overcasting the unfortunate little wretch's sufficiently beclouded prospects in life, seemed altogether out of the question. In the few minutes which were left him for deliberation, no better expedient suggested itself to him than that he personally should retain charge of Charlie Millen, until some more suitable quarters could be found. Accordingly, upon reaching Arranard, Charlie was firmly gripped, and transferred to an outside car, from which, after a long dark drive, he descended at the door of what he ascertained to be, not the police barracks, but Mr. Blake's own house.

And here at Lissangort, as it turned out, Charlie lodged for many a night. It was one of those establishments where things take their course with unlimited leisureliness, and where all business not immediately pressing is wont to be docketed 'some time or another' for an indefinite period. There was really no urgency in the case of Charlie Millen; and when the boy had been handed over to Mrs. Judy Devine, the housekeeping cook, Mr. Blake, withdrawing to his solitary abode in a remote wing, soon ceased to think at all frequently about the matter. Mrs. Devine, an elderly and sociable person, did not despise Charlie's company, being often lonesome, when none of her special cronies happened to have looked into her kitchen, and when the two maids were what she described as 'streeled off wid themselves the deer knows where.' She found him useful, too, in various small domestic duties. The guarded warning which Mr. Blake had thought fit to give her had taken the form of an assurance that 'the young rascal was as sharp as a needle, and up to anything,' so, falling in with this view, she readily ascribed to Charlie the possession of very unusual abilities, apparent in his handiness about shelling peas or plucking chickens. His diminutive size, for, although nearly nine, he looked barely six, helped to give an impression of precocity, and he was pronounced by everybody to be 'quare and ould-fashioned.' From time to time Mrs. Devine

reported upon him to the master, always, because she perceived that this was expected, emphasising his remarkable 'cuteness and sense, and always, because she wished to retain his society and services, declaring him as good as gold and as honest as the day. These statements pleased Mr. Blake, being in conformity with his own expressed opinion, and at the same time enabling him to say to himself, 'My good woman, if you knew but all.' Upon the rare occasions when he fell in with Charlie, he easily convinced himself that the boy's conversation and manners denoted singular shrewdness and intelligence. If he stood in sheepish silence, he was assumed to harbour wiliness too intense for words; if he whispered hoarsely, 'Tis, your honour,' and 'I do not, your honour,' his replies were chuckled over as sparkingly epigrammatic. Even his habit of fishing for pinkeens with a crumb on a crooked pin argued a very peculiar ingenuity. In fact, Mr. Blake came to regard Charlie Millen, the typically quick-witted street arab, as a discovery—by no means an invention—of his own, and to make a personal matter of the knowingness, skill, and daring which he had diverted from a career of crime.

As for Charlie himself, he quickly grew contented with his new surroundings, and left off dreaming of his mother. Lissangort kitchen seemed to him a paradise of unforbidden plenty, where he had no temptation to prowl and pilfer, as he had had to do in the cold and hungry other world, with its foe-infested streets and tantalising shop-windows. Presently that part of his life began to grow almost unimaginable among these altered circumstances, a mist filmed over his memories, and his disused predaceous instincts dwindled away. But even if that had not happened, one recollection, which remained vividly in his mind, would have prevented them from ever again misleading him. The master's strong condemnation of his thieving had made upon him a profound impression, which persisted long after he had ceased to be haunted by dread of the police. For the seldom-seen and all-commanding master became Charlie's deity, whom he worshipped from afar, with a devoutness rather singularly disinterested. Indeed, it might have been called the central fact in his uneventful existence. As the years went by, nothing particularly noteworthy befell him, except his increase in size and in capacity for doing odd jobs, so that he was sometimes employed out of doors. Fishing continued to be his favourite amusement, but his ambition gradually mounted from pinkeens and crooked pins to

'troutses' and real hooks. The dream of his life was that he might some day catch a fish which Mrs. Devine would pronounce fit for the master's breakfast.

II.

The passage of the next decade left as trivial traces as might be at Lissangort House. A somewhat burlier master, a slightly stiffer-jointed cook, and a small quiet youth, lately a smaller quieter child, beheld its close. Tommy, the brown cart-horse, had died, and Bobby, his successor, differed chiefly in name. Maggie Nolan, the young housemaid, had married Pat Hedican, the gardener's son, and Lizzie Farrell, her senior in the service, had undertaken to discharge her duties for the present single-handed, with a view to securing the situation later on for a growing-up niece. But it is rather invidious to select these incidents as especially worthy of record. Beyond their gates, the most remarkable innovation was the coming of the master's bachelor cousin, Mr. Gerald Warton, to occupy Carrickman House, which had long stood empty in its adjacent demesne. Immense wealth was attributed to Mr. Warton by local opinion, based mainly upon the improvements which he had set about making. They included the repairing of a ruined lodge, in which he placed a gamekeeper, whose principal occupation at first was the rearing of pheasants. Fabulous rumours ran as to the number of eggs that were being hatched, and the ton-weights of grain consumed by the multiplying broods. Certainly the field about Carr's lodge was thickly studded with coops, and the queer, strangled crows of the cock-pheasants might frequently be heard.

It was not Mr. Warton's sportsmanlike tastes, however, that made his arrival in the neighbourhood a matter of some importance at Lissangort, but the fact that he and the master had been friends in youth, and now, in a measure, resumed their intimacy, thus breaking through the master's long-established custom of neither visiting nor receiving visitors. Once a week or so Mr. Warton would step across by the field-path, which was the shortest route to his cousin's place, and now and then would have his company on the way home. Mrs. Devine said it was 'a Christian comfort to see the poor master behavin' himself different at all from an ould blind bat mopin' up in his roost.'

And Lizzie Farrell said that if he 'had the trouble of clanin' up for company, you wouldn't wonder if he had as lief they stayed away; but when all he had to do was to say, "How's yourself?" it was quare enough he wouldn't like a bit of variety of an odd while.' The Widdy Becker, on the contrary, who had dropped into the kitchen with some indefinite object, remarked, as she cooled her second cup of tea, that she 'didn't notice much signs of mopin' on his honour, glory be to God; he was off-hand and hearty enough any time a body might happen to meet him. And, for the matter of that, she recollected an ould Colonel Trant was livin' at Newtownmahony in her time, and as often as he'd see anybody offerin' to turn in at his gate, off wid him hot-fut to the house-yard, to be lettin' loose the big baste of a bloodhound he kep' convanient, that 'ud freeze your heart stiff, when you'd hear the cruel roars of it, throttin' along the shrubberies towards you. There wasn't many went visitin' him. Sure, 'twas just a fantigue some people took agin' seein' their neighbours, the same as other people took agin' aitin' their bit of food.'

At the time when Widdy Becker was philosophising thus, the master and his cousin were smoking in the dusty book-room, where they had met after a longer interval than usual. Mr. Warton had been away for a month, and related that upon his return to Carrickman he had found Carr, the keeper, in much concern about the pheasants. They had begun to disappear mysteriously some time before, and were now doing so in serious numbers.

'Carr himself's above suspicion,' Mr. Warton said, 'but I doubt that he's any great good as a detective. I must look into the thing myself as soon as I can. I have to be off again to-morrow for a week or ten days.'

'I'll tell you what,' said Mr. Blake; 'I'll set that young ruffian of mine, Charlie Millen, to keep an eye on them while you're away. They'll be bright lads if they circumvent him. I wouldn't mind betting any money that he'll have the ins and outs of the whole affair ready for you by the time you're back. It's a case of diamond cut diamond, you know.'

'Are you sure he mightn't be a little too sharp for us?'

Mr. Warton said. But his cousin replied:

'Oh, as to that, he's straight enough, no fear. We'll have him up here and tell him what we want.'

So Charlie, wondering and apprehending, obeyed a summons

to the book-room. 'The master's wantin' to spake to you,' Lizzie said, 'and Mr. Warton's along wid him. Are you after doin' e'er a quare job over there?'

Charlie's conscience was quite clear on that point, yet it could not keep him from quaking, especially at the master's first remark: 'I daresay you've heard that Mr. Warton has been missing his pheasants?'

'Sorra the feather of a one of them I ever laid eyes on, your honour,' said Charlie. 'It's only fishin' up the river I do be, now and agin, for trouts, and there's nothin' in it unless a couple of water-hins.'

'Well, we'd like you to leave the trout alone for a bit, and keep a look-out to see where those pheasants are going, and then bring word to Mr. Warton or to me, but of course say nothing to anybody else.'

'I will so, your honour, and I will not, your honour,' Charlie said submissively, perplexed.

'We must be careful that it doesn't come round to Carr,' said Mr. Warton, 'for he might misunderstand, and take offence.'

After a few further suggestions and injunctions, Charlie was dismissed, and returned to the kitchen with a slight tendency to self-importance, counteracted by a strong sense that he had not the least idea how he could set about doing what the master required. As the door closed, Mr. Blake said that he saw the young villain had some dodge already in his mind.

Charlie, of course, found his friends all agog with curiosity about the interview, but he made a good start by refusing to answer any questions upon the subject, declaring, with discreet subtlety, that he had been 'bid to not let on what they were talkin' about, even to Mr. Carr himself, who was mindin' the pheasants.' Naturally, therefore, ere that September sun had set behind Slieve Corish, all whom it in any way concerned had learned how Mr. Blake and Mr. Warton were after speaking to young Millen about the Carrickman pheasants, whatever he might have to say to them.

Now the persons most responsible for the diminishing of Mr. Warton's little flock were the three Brierleys, Peter and Joe, who worked on Matt Reilly's farm, and lived in a cabin near the Arranard Road, with Charlotte, their sister, who was employed in the kitchen up at Carrickman House close by across the fields. The

Brierleys had always had the name of being very respectable people, and might never have risked losing it, only for a concatenation of tempting circumstances, which drew them aside from the paths of rectitude. One link in this chain was the accidental discovery of stray pheasants resorting to a secluded meadow-corner, muffled away between lofty hedges, whither they could be lured more numerous by a judicious system of feeding; another was the possession of a friend constantly driving to and fro a grocer's van, which he willingly turned down the Brierleys' bit of breen, to pick up any parcel they might happen to have directed to an acquaintance of his in Arranard, whose brother kept a poulterer's shop in Dublin. Charlotte's part in the proceedings was to provide an ample and attractive supply of broken meats for the enticing of their victims; to keep vigilant eyes and wits about her in case of threatening signs; and, being neat-fingered, to parcel up the game in packages that dissembled their contents. The trio had carried on these operations for a considerable time without arousing the suspicions of even their nearest neighbours and friends. Had they done so they would have incurred almost unanimous censure, for there was little difference of public opinion upon the question whether or no pheasants might be regarded as common property.

Mrs. Felix Moriarty, an authoritative personage, expressed the general view accurately enough one day during a discussion. 'If it was runnin' wild in the woods the crathurs were,' she said, 'I wouldn't have a word agin one body makin' free wid them more than another. But when a person does be rearin' them onnathural under hins, and feedin' them the same as young turkeys, it stands to raison you had a right to be lettin' them alone, unless you would be evenin' yourself to a pack of tinkers, interferin' wid people's chuckens and ducks.'

The only dissentient voice was Bill Dowdall's, and he had no better argument than that 'if a man seen a chucken wid a tail on it half a yard long sittin' aitin' all before it in the middle of his bit of oats, 'twould be a poor case if he mightn't drive a stone at it, which his hearers regarded as merely a rather irrelevant exception to Mrs. Moriarty's rule.

Tidings of Charlie Millen's interview with Mr. Blake and Mr. Warton reached the Brierleys in due course, and the inference they drew was that he had somehow fallen under suspicion with respect to the missing pheasants. This misconception

caused them no uneasiness, but moved them to disdainful mirth.

'Is it the chap that does be moonin' up and down fishin' the river, where there never was heard tell of anythin' the len'th of me little finger since the world began? A great offer he'd make at it—cock him up!'

Carr, the gamekeeper, on the other hand, came nearer the mark, and, waxing as indignant as his employer had foreboded, vowed that he wouldn't be very long sending to the rightabout any young jackass who had the impudence to come spying round his premises. On Charlie himself the incident had laid a heavy burden of embarrassment and perplexity, the more so because his master was just then called away to Dublin for a week on business, and left him with vague but peremptory commands to have detected something by the time they met again. With the best will in the world to execute his commission, Charlie could not see an inch of any way towards it. He thought it his duty, however, as a preliminary step, to desert his beloved river, where the spreading crystal circles perpetually wove snares to catch his hopes of a bite, while elm leaves had begun to float by in crinkled flakes of fiery gold; and he substituted for his pleasant angling hours long spells of unprofitable sauntering, harassed and aimless, as near as he ventured to the keeper's lodge. He had all the time an exasperated sense that he was losing a grand chance of acquitting himself well in the master's eyes. For success in this affair would have been more creditable than the capture of the largest trout that ever swam; but unluckily it seemed no less out of reach.

On the day before the master was expected home, Andy Clery, the general man, and Pat Hearn, the gardener, attended Grattans-town Races with so much assiduity that they were disposed next morning to take things very easily indeed. Thus it happened that in the afternoon, when the master had to be fetched back from Arranard on the car, no better driver was forthcoming than Charlie Millen. He had seldom been entrusted with such a task, and would have felt some dignified pride in handling the reins, only that it was crushed by his consciousness of how complete a failure he must report. 'For,' he said to himself, 'the devil a fut of me knows what's goin' wid them ould fowls; and they say there's a dozen more of them missin' since Sunday.' As he jolted along past the mouth of the Brierleys' deep-banked boreen, who should

be standing there but Joe Brierley, with a good-sized wicker hamper set on the road beside him?

'Have you e'er a vacancy about you?' he called to Charlie.

'Sure, there's ne'er an atom on the car,' said Charlie, 'except meself and the master, when we pick him up at the station. Is it a sate you're wantin'?'

'Only just for the hamper,' said Joe. 'It's empty mineral wather bottles goin' back to Martin the grocer's in Main Street. Me sither brought them down from the House, and Christy Gatchell was intindin' to call for it wid the van, but he's after sendin' us word by O'Connor's ploughman that he's lost a shoe below, at Clonbwee, and won't be passin' this way at all; so I was lookin' out for someone else to give it a lift.'

'Och, to be sure,' said Charlie, enjoying this exercise of patronage. 'Stick it up, and welcome.'

'Just drop it at Martin's door passin' by,' said Joe, as he hoisted up the hamper, and secured it with a cord to the front and back rails, 'and lave word it's for Christy Gatchell; he'll know all about it, and 'twill be in time for the night mail anyway—the last delivery I mane to say.'

'All right!' said Charlie, and Joe departed, pleased at having effected his purpose, which he had done in opposition to the wishes of his brother and sister. It was running too big a risk altogether, they said, to be sending them about promiscuous that way, by people who might as likely as not make some quare unhandy mistake, and land them the mischief knows where. But Joe declared that they'd been kept full long already, and he didn't see the sense of letting two or three half-crowns go to loss. So, being a headstrong man, he slipped out after dinner unawares, and did as we have seen.

Charlie drove the seven miles to Arranard without any adventures, for one can hardly so call the excessive laziness of the skewbald mare, who would respond to the utmost efforts of her unfamiliar driver by nothing better than brief and uneasy spells of lolling, interposed between the sleepest jog-trots. Consequently, when they at length reached the town, he made straight for the station, lest he should be late for his master's train, and deferred the dropping of Joe Brierley's hamper until they were on their homeward journey. The sight of his master alighting on the platform, followed by Mr. Warton, caused him to regret more keenly than ever that he was bringing no news about the

pheasants. Mr. Warton, it appeared, had accepted a seat on the car, which made necessary a shifting of the hamper, and as Charlie unfastened Joe Brierley's knots, the dreaded questioning began. 'What,' said the master, 'has become of Andy Clery?'

This, indeed, was readily answered: 'If you please, your honour, he's that stiff to-day wid his rheumatics he couldn't stir hand or fut.'

'Then why didn't Pat Hearn drive?'

Here was no difficulty either. 'If you please, your honour, he was buryin' his mother's brother over away at Ballyskreen this mornin.'

'Well now, Charlie, how about those pheasants? Can you tell Mr. Warton where he should be looking for them?'

Just then Charlie was gathering the hamper in his arms to lift it from the car-seat, and he replied with a despondent gasp: 'I cannot, your honour. Bedad, now, I could tell you as much or as little, if it was packed up inside of that I was, along wid th'ould bottles, ever since your honours quit,' he added, setting it down heavily on the gravel.

Mr. Warton stooped over it to read the address, which was written on a page of an old account-book, and tied on with a leather bootlace. 'Bottles?' he said immediately. 'Why, what's this?' And he twitched out a little russet-barred feather, which showed its tip through the wickerwork.

He answered himself promptly by cutting the string and throwing back the lid, which disclosed to view nothing less than three brace of fine pheasants in their gay brown plumage. The hamper, in fact, was filled with them, save a few empty bottles inserted for the purpose of jingling plausibly. Scarcely could Charlie believe his eyes, and amazingly they widened in his sharp-chinned sunburnt face, beneath the shadowy shock of black hair feebly repressed by a small cloth cap. But while he stood dumfounded, he was nearly upset by a thump on the back. 'Well done, yourself,' said the master. 'You made a good haul when you were about it. From Joe Brierley, you say? They're not the people I'd have suspected; but one never knows where one is with anybody, and that's a fact. I didn't overstate his capabilities, Jerry, you see. "Packed up inside along with the bottles"—the young rascal.'

'Couldn't have made a neater job of it,' said his cousin. 'By Jove, Eddy, I'll tell you what, you ought to put him into the con-

stabulary. Evidently that's what he's cut out for, if he has another inch or so to grow. I can give you a recommendation to Colonel Perry, any day. He'd be invaluable in the detective department.'

'Exactly my idea,' said Mr. Blake. 'How'd you like the notion of being a police sergeant, Charlie?'

To these, and to other praises and prophecies, Charlie listened with bewildered dismay. He still retained enough of his original sentiments towards the police to make him feel much as a hare might have done at the proposal that it should occupy a prominent post in connection with a pack of hounds. The threat of such a reward urged him to explain how quite accidentally he had come by the hamper; yet it was difficult to disclaim all the merit so enthusiastically ascribed to him. In reply to inquiries respecting his stratagems, he could only stammer: 'I—I just walked about, sir'; whereupon he was assured that he had done it to some purpose, and might look forward to being a County Inspector one of these days. With that fearful promotion looming before him he started on his drive homeward. It contrasted and corresponded in several points with his first journey along that road nearly a dozen years ago. Then, he had sat huddled under the darkness of a winter evening, dreading, in a childish panic, that the police barracks were his destination. Now, as he jogged towards the September sunset, he was scared, hardly less childishly, by the same fate from a different aspect. Then he had just commenced as a successful pickpocket, a career nipped in the very bud. Now he was considered to have taken most brilliantly his first step in a totally distinct and yet allied calling.

As they approached the Brierleys' boreen, down which he was directed to turn, for the purpose of bringing home to the criminals their evil deeds, he said to himself, with a sinking heart: 'It's ragin' they'll all be, and thinkin' me the worst in the world. I'd no hand or part in it, anyway. I wisht to goodness I'd niver took the ould gentleman's purse. Bedad, I wisht everybody 'ud lave meddlin' wid other people's things alone.' An aspiration which, though not based upon the loftiest principles, is yet so highly moral that it suggests a fitting conclusion for this chapter from Charlie Millen's history.

JANE BARLOW.

HISTORICAL MYSTERIES.

BY ANDREW LANG.

XI. SAINT-GERMAIN THE DEATHLESS.

AMONG the best brief masterpieces of fiction are Lytton's 'The Haunters and the Haunted,' and Thackeray's 'Notch on the Axe' in 'Roundabout Papers.' Both deal with a mysterious being who passes through the ages, rich, powerful, always behind the scenes, coming no man knows whence, and dying, or pretending to die, obscurely—you never find authentic evidence of his decease. In other later times, at other courts, such an one reappears, and runs the same course of luxury, marvel, and hidden potency.

Lytton returned to and elaborated his idea in the Margrave of 'A Strange Story,' who has no 'soul,' and prolongs his physical and intellectual life by means of an elixir. Margrave is not bad, but he is inferior to the hero, less elaborately designed, of 'The Haunters and the Haunted.' Thackeray's tale is written in a tone of mock mysticism, but he owns that he likes his own story, in which the strange hero, through all his many lives or reappearances, and through all the countless loves on which he fatuously plumes himself, retains a slight German-Jewish accent.

It appears to me that the historic original of these romantic characters is no other than the mysterious Comte de Saint-Germain—not, of course, the contemporary and normal French soldier and minister of 1707-1778, who bore the same name. I have found the name, with dim allusions, in the unpublished letters and MSS. of Prince Charles Edward Stuart, and have not always been certain whether the reference was to the man of action or to the man of mystery. On the secret of the latter, the deathless one, I have no new light to throw, and only speak of him for a single reason. Aristotle assures us, in his 'Poetics,' that the best known myths dramatised on the Athenian stage were known to very few of the Athenian audience. It is not impossible that the story of Saint-Germain, though it seems as familiar as the myth of *Œdipus* or *Thyestes*, may, after all, not be vividly present to the memory of every reader. The omniscient Larousse, of the 'Dictionnaire

Universel,' certainly did not know one very accessible fact about Saint-Germain, nor have I seen it mentioned in other versions of his legend. We read, in Larousse, 'Saint-Germain is not heard of in France before 1750, when he established himself in Paris. No adventure had called attention to his existence; it was only known that he had moved about Europe, lived in Italy, Holland, and in England, and had borne the names of Marquis de Montferrat and of Comte de Bellamye, which he used at Venice.'

Lascelles Wraxall, again, in 'Remarkable Adventures' (1863), says: 'Whatever truth there may be in Saint-Germain's travels in England and the East Indies, it is indubitable that, from 1745 to 1755, he was a man of high position in Vienna,' while in Paris he does not appear, according to Wraxall, till 1757, having been brought from Germany by the Maréchal de Belle-Isle, whose 'old boots,' says Macalister the spy, Prince Charles freely damned, 'because they were always stuffed with projects.' Now we hear of Saint-Germain, by that name, as resident, not in Vienna, but in London, at the very moment when Prince Charles, evading Cumberland, who lay with his army at Stone, in Staffordshire, marched to Derby. Horace Walpole writes to Mann in Florence (December 9, 1745):

We begin to take up people . . . the other day they seized an odd man who goes by the name of Count Saint-Germain. He has been here these two years, and will not tell who he is, or whence, but professes that he does not go by his right name. He sings, plays on the violin wonderfully, composes, is mad, and not very sensible. He is called an Italian, a Spaniard, a Pole; a somebody that married a great fortune in Mexico, and ran away with her jewels to Constantinople; a priest, a fiddler, a vast nobleman. The Prince of Wales has had unsatiated curiosity about him, but in vain. However, nothing has been made out against him; he is released, and, what convinces me he is not a gentleman, stays here, and talks of his being taken up for a spy.

Here is our earliest authentic note on Saint-Germain: a note omitted by his French students. He was in London from 1743 to 1745, under a name not his own, but that which he later bore at the Court of France. From the allusion to his jewels (those of a deserted Mexican bride?), it appears that he was already as rich in these treasures as he was afterwards, when his French acquaintances marvelled at them. As to his being 'mad,' Walpole may refer to Saint-Germain's way of talking as if he had lived in remote ages, and known famous people of the past.

Having caught this daylight glimpse of Saint-Germain in Walpole, having learned that in December 1745 he was arrested and examined as a possible Jacobite agent, we naturally expect

to find contemporary official documents about his examination by the Government. Scores of such records exist, containing the questions put to, and the answers given by, suspected persons. But we vainly hunt through the Newcastle MSS. and the State Papers, Domestic, in the Record Office, for a trace of the examination of Saint-Germain. I am not aware that he has anywhere left his trail in official documents; he lives in more or less legendary memoirs, alone.

At what precise date Saint-Germain became an intimate of Louis XV., the Duc de Choiseul, Madame de Pompadour, and the Maréchal de Belle-Isle, one cannot ascertain. The writers of memoirs are the vaguest of mortals about dates; one only discerns that Saint-Germain was much about the French Court, and high in the favour of the King, having rooms at Chambord, during, and shortly after, the Seven Years' War, and at the time of the peace negotiations of 1762-1763. The art of compiling false or forged memoirs of that period was widely practised; but the memoirs of Madame du Hausset, who speaks of Saint-Germain, are authentic. She was the widow of a poor man of noble family, and was one of two *femmes de chambre* of Madame de Pompadour. Her manuscript was written, she explains, by aid of a brief diary which she kept during her term of service. One day M. Senac de Meilhan found Madame de Pompadour's brother, M. de Marigny, about to burn a packet of papers. 'It is the journal,' he said, 'of a *femme de chambre* of my sister, a good kind of woman.' De Meilhan asked for the manuscript, which he later gave to Mr. Crawford, one of the Kilwinning family, in Ayrshire, who later helped in the escape of Louis XVI. and Marie Antoinette to Varennes, where they were captured. With the journal of Madame du Hausset were several letters to Marigny on points of historical anecdote.¹

Crawford published the manuscript of Madame du Hausset, which he was given by De Meilhan, and the memoirs are thus from an authentic source. The author says that Louis XV. was always

¹ One of these gives Madame de Vieux-Maison as the author of a *roman à clef*, *Secret Memoirs of the Court of Persia*, which contains an early reference to the Man in the Iron Mask (died 1703). The letter-writer avers that D'Argenson, the famous minister of Louis XV., said that the Man in the Iron Mask was really a person *fort peu de chose*, 'of very little account,' and that the Regent d'Orléans was of the same opinion. This corroborates my theory, that the Mask was merely the valet of a Huguenot conspirator, Roux de Marsilly, captured in England, and imprisoned because he was supposed to know some terrible secret—which he knew nothing about. See *The Valet's Tragedy*, Longmans, 1903.

kind to her, but spoke little to her, whereas Madame de Pompadour remarked, 'The King and I trust you so much that we treat you like a cat or a dog, and talk freely before you.'

As to Saint-Germain, Madame du Hausset writes :

A man who was as amazing as a witch came often to see Madame de Pompadour. This was the Comte de Saint-Germain, who wished to make people believe that he had lived for several centuries. One day Madame said to him, while at her toilet, 'What sort of man was Francis I., a king whom I could have loved?' 'A good sort of fellow,' said Saint-Germain; 'too fiery—I could have given him a useful piece of advice, but he would not have listened.' He then described, in very general terms, the beauty of Mary Stuart and La Reine Margot. 'You seem to have seen them all,' said Madame de Pompadour, laughing. 'Sometimes,' said Saint-Germain, 'I amuse myself, not by making people believe, but by letting them believe that I have lived from time immemorial.' 'But you do not tell us your age, and you give yourself out as very old. Madame de Gergy, who was wife of the French ambassador at Venice fifty years ago, I think, says that she knew you there, and that you are not changed in the least.' 'It is true, madame, that I knew Madame de Gergy long ago.' 'But according to her story you must now be over a century old.' 'It may be so, but I admit that even more possibly the respected lady is in her dotage.'

At this time Saint-Germain, says Madame du Hausset, looked about fifty, was neither thin nor stout, seemed clever, and dressed simply, as a rule, but in good taste. Say that the date was 1760, Saint-Germain looked fifty; but he had looked the same age, according to Madame de Gergy, at Venice, fifty years earlier, in 1710. We see how pleasantly he left Madame de Pompadour in doubt on that point.

He pretended to have the secret of removing flaws from diamonds. The King showed him a stone valued at 6,000 francs—without a flaw it would have been worth 10,000. Saint-Germain said that he could remove the flaw in a month, and in a month he brought back the diamond—flawless. The King sent it, without any comment, to his jeweller, who gave 9,600 francs for the stone, but the king returned the money, and kept the gem as a curiosity. Probably it was not the original stone, but another cut in the same fashion; Saint-Germain sacrificing 3,000 or 4,000 francs to his practical joke. He also said that he could increase the size of pearls, which he could have proved very easily—in the same manner. He would not oblige Madame de Pompadour by giving the king an elixir of life: 'I should be mad if I gave the King a drug.' There seems to be a reference to this desire of Madame de Pompadour in an unlikely place, a letter of Pickle the spy to

Mr. Vaughan (1754)! This conversation Madame du Hausset wrote down on the day of its occurrence.

Both Louis XV. and Madame de Pompadour treated Saint-Germain as a person of consequence. 'He is a quack, for he says he has an elixir,' said Dr. Quesnay, with medical scepticism. 'Moreover, our master, the King, is obstinate; he sometimes speaks of Saint-Germain as a person of illustrious birth.'

The age was sceptical, unscientific, and, by reaction, credulous. The *philosophes*, Hume, Voltaire, and others, were exposing, like an ingenious American gentleman, 'the mistakes of Moses.' The Earl Marischal told Hume that life had been chemically produced in a laboratory, so what becomes of Creation? Prince Charles, hidden in a convent, was being coached by Mlle. Luci in the sensational philosophy of Locke, 'nothing in the intellect which does not come through the senses'—a queer theme for a man of the sword to study. But, thirty years earlier, the Regent d'Orléans had made crystal-gazing fashionable, and stories of ghosts and second-sight in the highest circles were popular. Mesmer had not yet appeared, to give a fresh start to the old savage practice of hypnotism; Cagliostro was not yet on the scene with his freemasonry of the ancient Egyptian school. But people were already in extremes of doubt and of belief; there might be something in the elixir of life and in the philosopher's stone; it might be possible to make precious stones chemically, and Saint-Germain, who seemed to be over a century old at least, might have all these secrets.

Whence came his wealth in precious stones, people asked, unless from some mysterious knowledge, or some equally mysterious and illustrious birth?

He showed Madame de Pompadour a little box full of rubies, topazes, and diamonds. Madame de Pompadour called Madame du Hausset to look at them; she was dazzled, but sceptical, and made a sign to show that she thought them paste. The Count then exhibited a superb ruby, tossing aside contemptuously a cross covered with gems. 'That is not so contemptible,' said Madame du Hausset, hanging it round her neck. The Count begged her to keep the jewel; she refused. Madame de Pompadour backed her refusal. But Saint-Germain insisted, and Madame de Pompadour, thinking that the cross might be worth forty louis, made a sign to Madame du Hausset that she should accept. She did, and the jewel was valued at 1,500 francs—which hardly proves that the other large jewels were genuine, though Von Gleichen believed that

they were, and thought the Count's cabinet of Old Masters very valuable.

The fingers, the watch, the snuff-box, the shoe buckles, the garter studs, the solitaires of the Count, on high days, all burned with diamonds and rubies, which were estimated, one day, at 200,000 francs. His wealth did not come from cards or swindling—no such charges are ever hinted at; he did not sell elixirs, nor prophecies, nor initiations. His habits do not seem to have been extravagant. One might regard him as a clever eccentric person, the unacknowledged child, perhaps, of some noble, who had put his capital mainly into precious stones. But Louis XV. treated him as a serious personage, and probably knew, or thought he knew, the secret of his birth. People held that he was a bastard of a king of Portugal, says Madame du Hausset. Perhaps the most ingenious and plausible theory of the birth of Saint-Germain makes him the natural son, not of a king of Portugal, but of a queen of Spain. The evidence is not evidence, but a series of surmises. Saint-Germain, on this theory, 'wrop his buth up in a mistry' (like that of Charles James Fitzjames de la Pluche), out of regard for the character of his royal mamma. I believe this about as much as I believe that a certain Rev. Mr. Douglas, an obstreperous Covenanting minister, was born in Loch Leven Castle to the captive Mary Stuart. However, Saint-Germain is said, like Kaspar Hauser, to have murmured of dim memories of his infancy, of diversions on magnificent terraces, and of palaces glowing beneath an azure sky. This is reported by Von Gleichen, who knew him very well, but thought him rather a quack. Possibly he meant to convey the idea that he was Moses, and that he had dwelt in the palaces of the Ramessids. The grave of the prophet was never known, and Saint-Germain may have insinuated that he began a new avatar in a cleft of Mount Pisgah; he was capable of it.

However, a less wild surmise avers that in 1763 the secret of his birth and the source of his opulence were known in Holland. The authority is the 'Memoirs' of Grosley (1813). Grosley was an archæologist of Troyes; he had travelled in Italy, and written an account of his travels; he also visited Holland and England,¹ and later, from a Dutchman, he picked up his information about Saint-Germain. Grosley was a Fellow of our Royal Society, and I greatly revere the authority of a F.R.S. His later years were

¹ *Voyage en Angl'etcrre*, 1770.

occupied in the compilation of his Memoirs, including an account of what he did and heard in Holland, and he died in 1785. According to Grosley's account of what the Dutchman knew, Saint-Germain was the son of a princess who fled (obviously from Spain) to Bayonne, and of a Portuguese Jew dwelling in Bordeaux.

What fairy and fugitive princess can this be, whom not in vain the ardent Hebrew wooed? She was, she must have been, as Grosley saw, the heroine of Victor Hugo's 'Ruy Blas.' The unhappy Charles II. of Spain, a kind of 'mammet' (as the English called the Richard II. who turned up in Scotland, having escaped from Pomfret Castle), had for his first wife a daughter of Henrietta, the favourite sister of our Charles II. This childless bride, after some ghostly years of matrimony, after being exorcised in disgusting circumstances, died in February 1689. In May 1690 a new bride, Marie de Neubourg, was brought to the grisly side of the crowned mammet of Spain. She, too, failed to prevent the wars of the Spanish Succession by giving an heir to the Crown of Spain. Scandalous chronicles aver that Marie was chosen as Queen of Spain for the levity of her character, and that the Crown was expected, as in the Pictish monarchy, to descend on the female side; the father of the prince might be anybody. What was needed was simply a son of the *Queen* of Spain. She had, while Queen, no son, as far as is ascertained, but she had a favourite, a Count Andanero, whom she made minister of finance. 'He was not a born Count,' he was a financier, this favourite of the Queen of Spain. That lady did go to live in Bayonne in 1706, six years after the death of Charles II., her husband. The hypothesis is, then, that Saint-Germain was the son of this ex-Queen of Spain, and of the financial Count, Andanero, a man 'not born in the sphere of Counts,' and easily transformed by tradition into a Jewish banker of Bordeaux. The Duc de Choiseul, who disliked the intimacy of Louis XV. and of the Court with Saint-Germain, said that the Count was 'the son of a Portuguese Jew, *who deceives the Court*. It is strange that the King is so often allowed to be almost alone with this man, though, when he goes out, he is surrounded by guards, as if he feared assassins everywhere.' This anecdote is from the 'Memoirs' of Von Gleichen, who had seen a great deal of the world. He died in 1807.

It seems a fair inference that the Duc de Choiseul knew what the Dutch bankers knew, the story of the Count's being a child of a princess retired to Bayonne—namely, the ex-Queen

of Spain—and of a Portuguese-Hebrew financier. De Choiseul was ready to accept the Jewish father, but thought that, in the matter of the royal mother, Saint-Germain ‘deceived the Court.’

A queen of Spain might have carried off any quantity of the diamonds of Brazil. Presents of diamonds from her almost idiotic lord must have been among the few comforts of her situation in a court overridden by etiquette. The reader of Madame d’Aulnoy’s contemporary account of the Court of Spain knows what a dreadful dungeon it was. Again, if born at Bayonne about 1706, the Count would naturally seem to be about fifty in 1760. The purity with which he spoke German, and his familiarity with German princely courts—where I do not remember that Barry Lyndon ever met him—are easily accounted for if he had a royal German to his mother. But, alas! if he was the son of a Hebrew financier, Portuguese or Alsatian (as some said), he was likely, whoever his mother may have been, to know German, and to be fond of precious stones. That Oriental taste notoriously abides in the hearts of the Chosen People.

‘Nay, nefer shague your gory locks at me,
 Dou canst not say I did it,’

quotes Pinto, the hero of Thackeray’s ‘Notch on the Axe.’ ‘He pronounced it, by the way, I *dit* it, by which I *know* that Pinto was a German,’ says Thackeray. I make little doubt but that Saint-Germain, too, was a German, whether by the mother’s side, and of princely blood, or quite the reverse.

Grosley mixes Saint-Germain up with a lady as mysterious as himself, who also lived in Holland, on wealth of an unknown source, and Grosley inclines to think that the Count found his way into a French prison, where he was treated with extraordinary respect.

Von Gleichen, on the other hand, shows the Count making love to a daughter of Madame Lambert, and lodging in the house of the mother. Here Von Gleichen met the man of mystery and became rather intimate with him. Von Gleichen deemed him very much older than he looked, but did not believe in his elixir.

In any case, he was not a cardsharp, a swindler, a professional medium, or a spy. He passed many evenings almost alone with Louis XV., who, where men were concerned, liked them to be of good family (about ladies he was much less exclusive). The Count had the grand manner; he treated some great personages in

a cavalier way, as if he were at least their equal. On the whole, if not really the son of a princess, he probably persuaded Louis XV. that he did come of that blue blood, and the King would have every access to authentic information. Horace Walpole's reasons for thinking Saint-Germain 'not a gentleman' scarcely seem convincing.

The Duc de Choiseul did not like the fashionable Saint-Germain. He thought him a humbug, even when the doings of the deathless one were perfectly harmless. As far as is known, his recipe for health consisted in drinking a horrible mixture called 'senna tea'—which was administered to small boys when I was a small boy—and in not drinking anything at his meals. Many people still observe this regimen, in the interest, it is said, of their figures. Saint-Germain used to come to the house of De Choiseul, but one day, when Von Gleichen was present, the minister lost his temper with his wife. He observed that she took no wine at dinner, and told her she had learned that habit of abstinence from Saint-Germain; that *he* might do as he pleased, 'but you, madame, whose health is precious to me, I forbid to imitate the regimen of such a dubious character.' Von Gleichen, who tells the anecdote, says that he was present when De Choiseul thus lost his temper with his wife. The dislike of De Choiseul had a mournful effect on the career of Saint-Germain.

In discussing the strange story of the Chevalier d'Éon, we have seen that Louis XV. amused himself by carrying on a secret scheme of fantastic diplomacy through subordinate agents, behind the backs and without the knowledge of his responsible ministers. The Duc de Choiseul, as Minister of Foreign Affairs, was excluded, it seems, from all knowledge of these double intrigues, and the Maréchal de Belle-Isle, Minister of War, was obviously kept in the dark, as was Madame de Pompadour. Now it is stated by Von Gleichen that the Maréchal de Belle-Isle, from the War Office, started a *new* secret diplomacy behind the back of De Choiseul, at the Foreign Office. The King and Madame de Pompadour (who was not initiated into the general scheme of the King's secret) were both acquainted with what De Choiseul was not to know—namely, Belle-Isle's plan for secretly making peace through the mediation, or management, at all events, of Holland. All this must have been prior to the death of the Maréchal de Belle-Isle in 1761; and probably De Broglie, who managed the regular old secret policy of Louis XV., knew nothing about this new clandestine adventure;

at all events, the late Duc de Broglie says nothing about it in his book 'The King's Secret.'¹

The story, as given by Von Gleichen, goes on to say that Saint-Germain offered to conduct the intrigue at the Hague. As Louis XV. certainly allowed that maidenly captain of dragoons, D'Éon, to manage his hidden policy in London, it is not at all improbable that he really entrusted this fresh cabal in Holland to Saint-Germain, whom he admitted to great intimacy. To the Hague went Saint-Germain, diamonds, rubies, senna tea, and all, and began to diplomatise with the Dutch. But the regular French minister at the Hague, D'Affry, found out what was going on behind his back—found it out either because he was sharper than other ambassadors, or because a personage so extraordinary as Saint-Germain was certain to be very closely watched, or because the Dutch did not take to the Undying One, and told D'Affry what he was doing. D'Affry wrote to De Choiseul. An immortal but dubious personage, he said, was treating, in the interests of France, for peace, which it was D'Affry's business to do if the thing was to be done at all. De Choiseul replied in a rage by the same courier. Saint-Germain, he said, must be extradited, bound hand and foot, and sent to the Bastille. De Choiseul thought that he might practise his regimen and drink his senna tea, to the advantage of public affairs, within those venerable walls. Then the angry minister went to the King, told him what orders he had given, and said that, of course, in a case of this kind, it was superfluous to inquire as to the royal pleasure. Louis XV. was caught; so was the Maréchal de Belle-Isle. They blushed and were silent.

It must be remembered that this report of a private incident could only come to the narrator, Von Gleichen, from De Choiseul, with whom he professes to have been intimate. The King and the Maréchal de Belle-Isle would not tell the story of their own discomfiture. It is not very likely that De Choiseul himself would blab. However, the anecdote avers that the King and the Minister for War thought it best to say nothing, and the demand for Saint-Germain's extradition was presented at the Hague. But the Dutch were not fond of giving up political offenders. They let Saint-Germain have a hint; he slipped over to London, and a London paper published a kind of veiled interview with him in June 1760.

¹ The Duc de Broglie, I am privately informed, could find no clue to the mystery of Saint-Germain.

His name, we read, when announced after his death, will astonish the world more than all the marvels of his life. He has been in England already (1743-17— ?); he is a great unknown. Nobody can accuse him of anything dishonest or dishonourable. When he was here before we were all mad about music, and so he enchanted us with his violin. But Italy knows him as an expert in the plastic arts, and Germany admires in him a master in chemical science. In France, where he was supposed to possess the secret of the transmutation of metals, the police for two years sought and failed to find any normal source of his opulence. A lady of forty-five once swallowed a whole bottle of his elixir. Nobody recognised her, for she had become a girl of sixteen without observing the transformation !

Saint-Germain is said to have remained in London but for a short period. Horace Walpole does not speak of him again, which is odd, but probably the Count did not again go into society. Our information, mainly from Von Gleichen, becomes very misty, a thing of surmises, really worthless. The Count is credited with a great part in the palace conspiracies of St. Petersburg ; he lived at Berlin, and, under the name of Tzarogy, at the Court of the Margrave of Anspach. Thence he went, they say, to Italy, and then north to the Landgrave, Charles of Hesse, who dabbled in alchemy. Here he is said to have died about 1780-85, leaving his papers to the Landgrave ; but all is very vague after he disappeared from Paris in 1760. When next I meet Saint-Germain he is again at Paris, again mysteriously rich, again he rather disappears than dies, he calls himself Major Fraser, and the date is in the last years of Louis Philippe. My authority may be cavilled at ; it is that of the late ingenious Mr. Vandam, who describes Major Fraser in a book on the characters of the Second Empire. He does not seem to have heard of Saint-Germain, whom he does not mention.

Major Fraser, 'in spite of his English (*sic*) name, was decidedly not English, though he spoke the language.' He was (like Saint-Germain) 'one of the best dressed men of the period. . . . He lived alone, and never alluded to his parentage. He was always flush of money, though the sources of his income were a mystery to everyone.' The French police vainly sought to detect the origin of Saint-Germain's supplies, opening his letters at the post-office. Major Fraser's knowledge of every civilised country at every period was marvellous, though he had very few books. 'His memory was something prodigious. : : : Strange to say, he used

often to hint that his was no mere book knowledge. "Of course, it is perfectly ridiculous," he remarked, with a strange smile, "but every now and then I feel as if this did not come to me from reading, but from personal experience. At times I become almost convinced that I lived with Nero, that I knew Dante personally, and so forth."¹ At the major's death not a letter was found giving a clue to his antecedents, and no money was discovered. *Did* he die? As in the case of Saint-Germain, no date is given. The author had an idea that the major was 'an illegitimate son of some exalted person' of the period of Charles IV. and Ferdinand VII. of Spain.

The author does not mention Saint-Germain, and may never have heard of him. If his account of Major Fraser is not mere romance, in that warrior we have the undying friend of Louis XV. and Madame de Pompadour. He had drunk at Medmenham with Jack Wilkes; as Riccio he had sung duets with the fairest of unhappy queens; he had extracted from Blanche de Béchemel the secret of Goby de Mouchy. As Pinto, he told much of his secret history to Mr. Thackeray, who says: 'I am rather sorry to lose him after three little bits of "Roundabout Papers."'

Did Saint-Germain really die in a palace of Prince Charles of Hesse about 1780-85? Did he, on the other hand, escape from the French prison where Grosley thought he saw him, during the French Revolution? Was he known to Lord Lytton about 1860? Was he then Major Fraser? Is he the mysterious Muscovite adviser of the Dalai Lama? Who knows? He is a will-o'-the-wisp of the memoir-writers of the eighteenth century. Whenever you think you have a chance of finding him in good authentic State papers, he gives you the slip; and if his existence were not vouched for by Horace Walpole, I should incline to deem of him as Betsey Prig thought of Mrs. Harris.

¹ *An Englishman in Paris*, vol. i. pp. 130-133. London, 1892.

AUTUMN IN CASSIAR.

IN September, when the Red Queen calls to her children, all Indians, and such white men as have any wild blood left in them, must needs answer to her call, not necessarily because they want to kill anything, but because their instincts drive them back to the primitive environments of their race, because they long for the stillness of the great forests, the roar of the rapids, the cleansing winds which scream about the high places where the big-horn dwell, and for all the glory of colour—ruby and living gold—in which the cotton-woods, the fire-weeds, and the sumachs give back the sunshine they have hoarded in the long days of summer.

Big-game hunters, as I have known them, are not necessarily butchers. That is not putting the case strongly enough. I have known many big-game hunters, and, but for one man, I could say that I had never known a butcher among them, and I doubt whether either of us who stood that September at the gateway to Jötunheim would ever have collected many trophies if the long-range camera had been invented twenty years ago.

But, alas! the camera had not even been brought to a reasonable state of perfection in that September, so that we were only an ordinary pair of Britons looking for something to kill, and rendered desperate by the thought that between us and the sparse pine forests and veils of shifting snow, where the great game roamed, were 150 miles of a waterway on which no steamers plied, and for which we could hire neither boat nor crew.

‘There is that little two-man canim,’ said W. P.

‘It would hardly hold us, much less our baggage.’

‘Then let the baggage rip.’ (He was going in for the whole winter.) ‘All we really want will go in our pockets—a plug of baccy, matches, and a little grub of some sort. We are sure to shoot something or catch a fish on the way up.’

‘And blankets?’

‘Oh, we can make a big fire and sleep near it. Lord! old W., it isn’t cold yet, is it? If you don’t make any mislicks with the paddle we shall have a capital trip.’

But I knew W. P. In a country where men live in canoes there are none to beat him, and it is recorded of him that upon

one occasion he lived and worked for ten days upon a borrowed moccasin string and the tenth part of an arctic mouse.

I had no intention of attempting to rival him in either of his favourite rôles, and therefore we had to look about for some more reasonable method of reaching Telegraph Creek, since a longer sojourn in Wrangel, the debateable spot between dry land and ocean, would have been unendurable.

I wonder if there is any place on earth like Wrangel. If there is, I, at least, have never seen it. Round it and among its tributary islands veer and shift mists and black rainstorms, and from the points which flank it peep through the mists huge antediluvian monsters, knee-deep in marshy growths, and overgrown with devil's club and rank grass.

They are not prehistoric beasts peeping from antediluvian forests, but only the weird emblems of the natives, set to guard the graveyards. The effect is startling at first.

In the mildewed wooden town the waves lap against the sides of the cabins, wash and moan under the wooden side-walks, and gnaw at the props on which half the town stands. Seals and halibut and other silent sea beasts look in at the windows, and the Indians pass almost as much of their time in their canoes as clams in their shells. Fishing and freighting are the only industries, and, since Wrangel is a prohibition town, the consumption of whisky is the only amusement. It was necessary to get out of Wrangel, and that quickly; and at last I hit upon a means.

M., a little scarlet-headed free trader, who was attempting to compete with the Hudson Bay Company in the interior, was, like ourselves, 'stuck.'

He had three thousand pounds of goods to take up the Stickine, and two canoes to take the freight in, but he had only a crew and a-half. He wanted two more men. We offered ourselves for these places, bargaining to work for our passage and our food—not a very liberal offer really, because even if you had been a millionaire in those days you would have found it almost impossible to procure a canoe in which you could travel to Telegraph Creek as a passenger pure and simple.

The vicissitudes of canoeing on our northern rivers are such that at times, at any rate, every man in a canoe must work.

At first the little chap did not like the look of us, and was inclined to say 'No.' I suppose that some suspicion of Government Street still clung to us, but the mention of my companion's

name sufficed to remove M.'s objections ; and I think that he made a good bargain, for W. P. was, of course, the best man in the canoes, and at the end of the trip the trader offered me ' forty dollars a month and your grub, Cap, whenever you've a mind to pull in a tow-rope again.' I was rather heavier than most of his crew, and weight, if you use it honestly, tells on a towing line.

From Wrangel to the canyon, in the Coast range, everything is of the water, fishy, and everything that lives, lives on salmon.

At the canyon all this alters as if by magic.

The mists lift ; the snow peaks take clear outlines ; the sun shines ; wood burns generously again ; the forest grows more open ; the hideous devil club, with its broad leaves and poisoned spines, disappears ; things less abhorrent to man than the grizzly and the porcupine move in the woods ; there are moose tracks in the alder bottom ; sheep and goats on the higher peaks, the feet of which dip in the river.

Instead of the ducks and gulls which have followed you from salt water, there are grouse on the lowlands, ptarmigan on the tablelands where the caribou dwell, and rabbits everywhere.

You have left the home of the Thlinkit, who is a fisherman, for that of the Tahl Tan, who is a hunter ; the land of the salmon-eater for that of the rabbit-eater ; Alaska for Cassiar.

But in the canoe the work grows harder. At the mouth of the river, steady, dogged pulling against a moderate current is all that is asked of you. After you have passed through the canyon, the real canoe work begins. The crews are up and in their canoes at dawn ; there are four meals a day, and all rendered necessary by hard work of a dozen different kinds. For awhile you may paddle, but soon the sound of rapid water comes to you, and then it is a case of poling, in which the novice makes a mess of it, and soaks himself to the waist with the trickle from a badly handled pole, even if he doesn't miss the bottom with his weapon to find it with his head ; or else the water is too strong even for poling, so that all hands, but one, land, and, putting themselves in a yoke, haul the canoe against the stream, with buttered boulders under their feet, and snags on the river bank to catch the tow-rope every hundred yards.

Or it may be that the water grows stronger still, so that a loaded canoe can neither be poled nor towed against it, in which case all the freight has to be taken out and transported on men's shoulders over a portage, while other men, with wild shouts and

laughter, hold and drive the empty canoe up the riffles like a salmon going up a fish ladder; or, as a *bonne bouche* towards evening on the only day on which you have managed to keep fairly dry, you may see a great rocky nose projecting across the towing-path, right into the boil of the white water.

This excites little M., the boss *voyageur*, whose red hair stands up at sight of it, while the flavour of his language becomes more French than Canadian.

But he knows his work. Both crews combined tow the first canoe to the very edge of the boil on the near side of the nose, one man only being left in the canoe to steer her. At this point one-half of the towing gang sits down like a team in a tug-of-war, while the other half makes a dash for the rock, and goes leaping and slithering over it, carrying the loose end of the long towing line with it. Once over the *mauvais pas*, these dash out into the stream as far as they dare, and then, having got their grip against the current, yell to the white faces down stream to let her go, and come like horses before the canoe drags them off their feet.

Whatever it is that you are asked to do in such a canoe trip, you may be quite certain that if you are an honest worker all your muscles will be strained to the utmost, you will be wet to the waist when you are not wet to the neck, and when night comes you will sleep as long as you are allowed to, although a sand bar, which is generally your camping place, makes the hardest mattress in the world.

After ten days of this, having worked like men and been lucky, we threw away our oilskins and gave away our gum boots, knowing that when we returned we should shoot down the river with the current or on snowshoes, doing with ease five days' journey in one.

At Telegraph Creek, the hamlet at the head of navigation, my friend and I parted, he to spend his winter looking for white sheep somewhere down the Liard, and I to take a last look at Level Mountain and its wild herds before the coming rush of gold-seekers developed Cassiar into a series of sordid mining camps.

There were then no horses available for packing; but it was almost better so, since I was strong, the distance short, and I had had the luck to secure an Indian boy, Rouge, and an ancient nigger, Noir, who had drifted into Cassiar in the first mining rush from a Californian fruit farm, and had been too lazy or too impecunious to get home again.

He was a gem, my nigger. In spite of the change of climate he

was all nigger still—shiftless, lazy, light-hearted, the most inconsequent rascal that ever breathed. He never carried his full share of the load, and would shift the burden in the most shameless manner upon his smaller work-mate; but he laughed for hours when he found that in revenge we had made him pack an extra twenty-five pound boulder, of which he knew nothing. He forgot to bring a change of socks, and therefore cut the ends off his blankets and extemporised a pair, sleeping for the rest of the trip curled up like a dog to economise blanket space.

When I found him he was nailing empty sardine tins over the holes in his roof; when I left him he had gone to reside with a friend rather than make his own cabin snow-proof. Of such and some others is the population of Cassiar. I spent the first night with 'some others'—members, these, of the tribe of Tahl Tans, who live by hunting and wander the year through over the Arctic Slope.

These, too, have heard the first whisper of civilisation, and have paid so much heed to it that they have built them a village, into which Rouge and Noir and I blundered towards nightfall.

Once a year the wandering hunters return from somewhere on their estate of many million acres and camp in this village, the houses of which are always kept locked, while the spare clothes and other unneeded assets of the owners swing on poles above the closed doorways.

This, you see, saves the trouble of opening the doors and groping about inside if you, the owner, should be passing and want anything.

At the date of our visit some of the tribe were in the neighbourhood—handsome, hawk-like men, and rather pretty women, who come to dance and fish when the salmon run up to spawn—but only the medicine man was in residence. The rest were somewhere just outside, and preferred to remain there. Unfortunately, Rouge brought the doctor down upon me, and I had to spend the night with him. Once he had been a hunter; then civilisation and sciatica met him, and he became a medicine man and a miser.

I passed the night on the first rung of the ladder of civilisation, or, if you like it better, on a bedstead, the only bedstead in the Tahl Tan, the outline of which had been built in Boston, while the springs of it were made by the doctor out of untrimmed fir poles.

He showed me his wealth before he put me on my grid, so that if I could not sleep I might think. It was a curious investment that he had made, from our point of view. All round the walls of

his one room were placed chests of drawers or vast brass-bound saratoga trunks, piled upon each other.

These 'saratogas' were his favourites, for inside they were filled with men's linen shirts, bowler hats, kid shoes, American clocks, and other useful and easily negotiable assets, while in themselves they were priceless as coffins.

Every really decent Tahl Tan, having wandered at will all his life, is folded up and put away in a brass-bound saratoga at his death, the said saratoga being set up upon trestles in any prominent position outside.

The country is full of such, and at first sight all this apparently derelict luggage in such a country is puzzling. You get used to it at last, as I did to that old lady, the doctor's wife, who, either from a spirit of hospitality or because she had lost a relation some days ago, sat down solemnly in the corner of the cabin, with a black robe over her head, and keened steadily from the beginning of the doctor's display of treasure until dawn delivered me from my grid.

Do you wonder that I sympathised with those brown village builders outside, or that I was glad to feel the soft pine needles under my feet next morning, or even to lose myself in that veil of drifting snow which seemed to shroud the edge of caribou land? Even that was better than the fusty darkness of the would-be civilised, but when we reached the tops the best in the world lay before us.

From the mist we came out upon a rolling tableland of dazzling whiteness, round the edge of which were clumps of pines, dressed as Santa Claus would have them, and hung with a million sunlit jewels.

In the last of these clumps we camped; nor would any but the keenest eyes have found a human habitation in that mound of shaken snow which our tent immediately became.

Camp pitched, we went out into the Indian's pastures, untilled, unsown, unfenced, all but infinite, and at times full of his wild cattle.

This was one of those times. It was a season of plenty in Cassiar, and the snow told the story before we had left the fringe of timber. Everywhere there were rabbit tracks, and before we had gone a hundred yards, one of the twenty rabbits who had no doubt been watching us since we started moved an ear. Then, of course, we saw him, and almost at the same time we saw half-a-

dozen grouse sitting like owls on the lower limbs of a tree right above our heads. They were the last we saw, and we left them sitting on the limit of grouse-land. In the first hollow we came to, beyond a great barrier of dry 'hard-hack' scrub, the snow itself seemed to rise and sail away on pigeon's wings; and while we were debating this marvel, and, therefore, standing still, we saw that there were at least a hundred dainty, bright-eyed, white forms pecking, or tripping over the snow, or standing at gaze in the hollow.

There were nearly as many, and often more, in every hollow we passed that day; and so plentiful is the ptarmigan in some parts of Cassiar that I am almost tempted to believe that a man who could shoot as well as Lord Walsingham might kill more ptarmigan in a day in Cassiar than that great shot ever killed grouse in a day—and I have not forgotten the score made on the Blubberhouse moors in 1872.

Luckily, no one is likely to try it. Cartridges weigh so much that we who travel the country rely upon a small-bore rifle to cut the heads off such rabbits, grouse, and ptarmigan as we require for our suppers. They will let you come close enough for that.

Ah, stand still! What? You don't see him yet, though he weighs four hundred pounds and has twenty tines on his antlers? When I caught a glimpse of him, he was just a grey line a few inches above the hard-hack, moving slowly across our front. He must have come out of that patch of balsams, and moved into the open with his head down. Then he had a whiff of our scent.

Ah, you see him now, do you? Well, watch him go! Crouch down gently out of his sight. That has done it! The splendid head that was at gaze, looking as if it had been carved in stone, is turned away sharply, and the hard-hack crashes loudly under the heavy trot of the caribou.

As long as he saw you, and you were motionless, he allowed you to look at him, but he would not stand another moment when the danger he suspected became one he could no longer watch.

Well, it does not matter a little bit. He carried a good head, and was no doubt the second best buck of some big band, looking for a smaller band of which he, having been driven from his own, might usurp the chieftainship, and he will by his flight disturb a good deal of game.

But to-day we are out for the best head or none, and the rolling lands are filled with caribou. Look at the beasts now below us!

That buck's flight has moved some of them out of the folds and hollows of the tableland, so that, looking down on them, even this wonderfully closely written page of snow round our feet is credible, telling as it does of the wanderings of thousands of great-footed beasts.

For a couple of hours we lie and watch the life of this teeming tableland, always with at least a couple of bands in sight.

At last we become specially interested in the family troubles of one grand old buck, and decide that, as something has to be killed, he must die; and this not only because he carries the finest head we have seen, but because we have pity on him.

He is over-much married, and his big band of frolicsome young fools is wearing him to a skeleton.

There are three young bucks hanging about the flanks of the master's band. These he has obviously thrashed time and again, but they still linger on the skyline.

During his last battle a giddy young hind has strayed away from home, and, with head down, the old fellow plods after her to bring her in again.

If we run now along the gully in which we have been lying, he must pass us on his way back to the band; and the wind is in our favour.

I take it that what he said to her was convincing, for she came back meekly enough, but unfortunately for him, just as she passed us and checked, noticing the taint in the air, his eye fell upon his rivals sneaking up towards the forbidden ground.

'Confound it, must I lick those infernal young coxcombs again?' he muttered.

Well, no, old fellow! It is their turn to worry now, for a strange metallic sound has rung out from the hard-hack bushes, and without even having heard it, you sleep, lucky in that you have never known what it means to fall from mastership among the men of your race to the position of a worn-out 'has been,' who takes long dying.

It may be that I am too imaginative, but it has always seemed to me that Nature is so much in sympathy with her wild children that she resents their death.

Be that as it may, I know that when you have slain the master ram of a range, you will be lucky if you get out of the country without seeing more than a mantilla of white lace upon the peaks as you leave them.

If you hang round the mountain streams until the last of the salmon collect the wandering grizzlies in such quantities that you make a fair bag, the river begins to freeze, and you race out for your life, afraid to sleep at night lest the ice growing should pack round your canoe and hold you fast; and here in caribou land, after as fair a day as ever broke in Cassiar, the wind rose and tore down the little trees about our tent, and our journey home was across barrens and swamps, through a darkness of wet, falling snow, steering through the timber by a pale, blueish spot which pretended to be the sun.

CLIVE PHILLIPPS-WOLLEY.

SOME NATURAL HISTORY.

THE husband had only just got into work again after three months without employment, and that was why they did without a doctor, depending only upon the assistance of a woman who had had much experience in that over-populated district. That, too, was why the mother tried to get about too soon, and, thanks to a premature morning at the wash-tub, was thrown back in her recovery for weeks. But the baby thrived, and in due season Mrs. Hawkins brought herself to be churched and her child to be christened, and so, without benefit of godfathers, he received the name of Albert.

Albert's vocation for the next three and a-half years was to be in the way, and he discharged his responsibilities in this respect with a devotion which left nothing to the imagination. By this time, however, he was mature enough to sit on a doorstep, to play in the street without being run over, and to act as nurse to his little sister, whom he tried in vain to initiate into the mysteries of the changing fashions. Hoops, it is true, were a little beyond him; nor was he able to protect his property from the clutches of a monster of six from a neighbouring district, who triumphantly trundled away Albert's hoop round one corner just ten seconds before Albert's father turned the other on his way home from the gasworks, whereupon Albert was chastised, which seems unfair; but he developed a fine taste in marbles, and his grotto, made of mud, scallop-shells, bits of slate, faded flowers, and old tram-tickets, was a thing of beauty and a joy till kites came in again, and grottoes were forgotten.

Then scarlet-fever broke out, and there were two cases in the house next door. One of the children was detected by an eagle-eyed vestry official and promptly despatched to the fever hospital; but the other was secluded by his mother till peeling-time, when he resumed his play in the streets. Not unnaturally, Albert sickened shortly afterwards, and by the time that he had been fetched away in a queer four-wheeled cab with ground-glass windows, a nurse in attendance, and a driver wearing a hat embroidered with the initials M.A.B., his sister was ill too. Her illness did not last long, for a week later another queer vehicle drew up at the door, and,

amid the sympathetic comments of a crowd of neighbours, her little body was drawn away to be laid to rest in a grave where twelve others already slept. Albert's parents could not afford a private grave.

Meanwhile, Albert, unconscious of the gap in the circle at home, was having a perfectly splendid time in the hospital. He was a bright little chap by nature, and, under the fostering influences of good nursing, wholesome feeding, and plenty of happiness, thrived as much in five weeks as he had thriven in five months at home.

Albert returned, and lonely enough he found it. Loneliness resulted in bad behaviour and the frequenting of unruly company, and it became clear that something must be done. 'Why don't you send 'im to school?' asked a stout neighbour, mother of thirteen children, seven of whom were dead, as she discussed the matter with Albert's mother. 'E's too little,' replied Mrs. Hawkins; 'they won't take 'em at the Board School till they're four.' 'Oh, yus, they will,' said the neighbour. 'You go and see Mrs. Mackintosh; she'll put 'im with the bybies.' Thus it came about that Albert first went unwillingly to school.

But after two or three days the unwillingness ceased, for school among the babies turned out to be organised play, with occasional romps. The teacher in charge of the tiny tots was an elderly woman, who in a motherly way taught her little charges how to behave, and laid the foundations of sound discipline with unvarying kindness. Morning by morning Albert was impatient to be gone as soon as ever his mother would take him; afternoon by afternoon he had heaps to tell her when she came to fetch him home. Wet days and Saturdays were sad times, and holidays seemed hideously long, but the return to school was always welcomed with uproarious joy.

So the swift months passed by, and the day when Albert was five took everybody by surprise. This birthday was marked by his promotion in school from being a baby to being an infant who learned real lessons, said 'ullo!' with engaging confidence to all grown-up strangers whose business brought them within his school playground, and looked with a certain disdain upon babies who only played. Albert began to develop an ambition, which was to obtain an attendance medal. According to the custom of elementary schools every scholar who was neither late nor absent morning or afternoon for a whole school year won a bright medal, which simple trophy was much coveted. 'Please, teacher,' said Albert during

his second year with the infants, 'how many more years shall I be at school?' The teacher gave the problem the consideration which it deserved, and returned the correct answer to the inquirer. 'Then,' said Albert emphatically, 'I shall get nine medals.' But he didn't. One year it was measles, another year it was mumps, a third year it was snowy weather and an absence of boots (his father being out of work), that dashed his hopes to the ground; and once he got safely to within three weeks of the end of the year when an unlucky piece of orange-peel sent him crawling home in bitter tears—tears that were shed more for the lost medal than for the pain in his ankle. Indeed, it was not until he was eleven, and fairly high up among the big boys, that Albert was called up before the school to have the shining thing pinned over his beating heart by the School Board member for the division in which the school was situated.

Life in the boys' division was sterner but more glorious than it had been among the infants. There were no women teachers here, but men, and over all the great head-master himself—Mr. Braid. Mr. Braid had been head-teacher of the boys' department ever since the school had been built, in what was then a rough neighbourhood, three-and-twenty years before. Often enough opportunities had been his of taking charge of newer and more palatial schools, but he felt that his vocation lay in the place where he had worked so long, and remained at his post watching, with no pang of jealousy, the appointment of younger and less capable men to coveted positions. Perhaps he had his reward. Years before, shortly after he came, it had been his duty to give sharp punishment to an ill-behaved youth. Next day a half-drunken gas stoker burst into the room, strode up to the head-teacher, and felled him to the ground. It was the culprit's father, who swore that no teacher should lay finger on son of his. Happily the other masters rushed to the rescue, and Mr. Braid escaped with his life and with a scar that he will carry to the grave. It was a crisis in the history of the school and of the district, and Mr. Braid proved equal to it. Instead of calling in the police, he went, as soon as he was well enough, to the man's house, found him sober and ashamed, and spoke to him as man to man. 'I've got my duty to do,' he said, in conclusion, 'and I'll do it if I die for it; and, what is more, I look to you parents to help us teachers, not to make things harder for us.' They shook hands at parting, and from that hour Mr. Braid had no firmer supporter than the man who had half killed

him. No such incident would be possible now. Most of the younger men in the district have passed through his hands. The parents know that their lads are safe in his care. The managers of the school have implicit confidence in his judgment. The clergy consult him in their perplexities about Sunday-school and choir practice. Often you will see a tanned soldier or a, nut-brown sailor making his way to the head-master's private room ; it is one of his old pupils come to shake hands with Mr. Braid, and, perhaps, to become his disciple in harder questions than can be solved by the rule of three.

It was seldom enough that Albert came into official contact with the head-teacher, for most of the instruction was given by the assistant-masters ; indeed, Albert could have wished that the occasions had been even less frequent. To tell the truth, Albert was approaching the awkward age, and the interviews took place for the most part after school hours, and were painful to both parties. 'I should be sorry to rule by means of the cane,' said Mr. Braid once, 'but I should be sorry, indeed, to have to rule without it,' and a certain set of boys, of whom Albert was an admiring follower, gave the master ample opportunities of putting his theories into practice. But, in spite of these interludes, school-time was happy enough, and our young scapegrace learned many a thing which he was destined to forget as soon as school years were ended. Of these elementary arithmetic was not one ; the lad kept his calculating powers bright by exercising them upon certain simple sums connected with the betting odds.

It was at this time of his life that Albert first made his real acquaintance with the country. Of course, he had spent various hours at the seaside and in Epping Forest on the occasion of Sunday-school treats, and he had once been by steamer to Hampton Court when the annual choir excursion took that direction, (shortly afterwards his brief career in the choir ended ingloriously owing to a rash indulgence in cigarettes in the vestry), but he had never spent a night out of London. One day in the late spring, however, Mr. Braid came into the class-room and said : 'If any of you boys want to go into the country this summer by means of the Children's Country Holiday Fund you must give in your names before the end of next week.' It suddenly occurred to Albert that he would like to go, and he easily succeeded in badgering his mother into giving the required permission and into putting by the necessary pence to pay the small sum required of him towards the expenses.

The eventful day of departure arrived, and Albert found himself with forty other youngsters in the school playground. After a searching examination by the district nurse, which resulted in two unfortunates being detained to work out their destiny in measles at home instead of carrying destruction to the countryside, the whole crew were packed into a borrowed coal-van under the charge of one of the local committee, to be conveyed to the railway terminus three miles away. Each child had a large pink ticket of identification pinned on the breast, a bundle of some kind containing a more or less sufficient change of clothing, and a paper bag of provisions meant for the journey, but consumed before the school was out of sight; each was pale with the summer heat of London; each was wildly excited; and the unhappy gentleman sitting in the coal dust with his legs hanging over the tailboard had a singularly interesting time. But somehow or other they were all despatched safely by train, and the conductor made his way to the nearest 'wash and brush up, 2d.,' with a sense of relief in his heart and lifelong vows trembling upon his lips.

Albert's letters home during the succeeding fortnight were scanty and formal. They made no mention of the terrible day when the good farmer's wife with whom he was lodged was within an ace of sending him straight home; nor, indeed, did they tell of that adventurous sail across the duckpond on a flimsy raft, which resulted in the complete ruin of the three pairs of trousers belonging to the three sailors; nor yet of the hasty visit of the doctor to deal with an anguish born of green apples. Something leaked out later concerning Albert's terror lest cows should bite; and the day when the pigs unlatched the gates of their styes and had to be caught and driven home by Albert (that was how he explained matters) is still remembered in the village. All that is certain, however, is that when the too brief fortnight ended, and a fat red-cheeked Albert, many times too stout for his waistcoat, had to return, his hostess was in tears at the thought of separation, and sent him home laden with good things packed in a great big basket; and that thereafter kindly letters were exchanged between town and country; and that Christmas brought the twin brother of the August hamper.

The lad had to help to swell the family income before he left school for regular work. The number of his brothers and sisters had grown steadily, with the result that whereas Sunday saw a magnificent hot dinner, which usually lasted through most of the

afternoon, and Monday and Tuesday were marked by the rapid disappearance of the remnants of Sunday's feast, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday were kept as days of abstinence. During the last half of the week the children's dinners consisted of a slice of bread and a farthing to buy sweets, the mother living on bread soaked in tea that her husband might have sustenance enough to keep him going at his heavy work. In the winter things were harder, and many a time did Albert go blue and hungry to school, till the family pride gave way and he was suffered to breakfast on the mug of cocoa and the hunk of bread which certain poor but charitable folk enabled the vicar to supply, morning by morning, to a hundred children.

Fortunately it happened that the local barber's business was growing, and, after a brief and businesslike conversation between the barber and Mr. Hawkins, Albert took up his duties out of school hours as lather-boy at the haircutting saloon. The busiest times were Saturday night and Sunday morning, when the little shop was packed with the men of the district, each of them armed with a black clay pipe, a week's growth of beard, and a newspaper. In turn they dropped into the shaving-chairs and lay back luxuriously while Albert, whom they humorously designated 'Young Sweeney Todd,' lathered them in preparation for the barber's operations. It was a perfectly scientific instance, had they but known it, of economic division of labour.

Occasionally there was a press of business on the other days of the week, and on such days Albert was absent from school, while one of his brothers carried a note with a trumped-up and very transparent excuse to the head-master; but Mr. Braid knew his district, and a glance at the broken boots of the messenger told him all that he required to know of the real necessities of the case.

One day Albert came home with a queer feeling of mingled desolation and expectation; schooldays were done. His mind was running on a few words of excellent advice from his head-master, and he carried in his pocket a few lines of recommendation from the same friend, which enabled him to get a place with the news-agent in the main thoroughfare. He had entered, at fourteen, upon man's estate. Man's estate did not prove, in practice, to be singularly eventful. Work began at half-past six with selling the morning papers to workmen as they hurried to catch the early trains; it continued with sweeping out the shop and delivering more morning papers at the houses of a few resident subscribers;

it ended whenever the last edition of the latest evening paper was got rid of. Albert was not sorry when he was old enough and big enough to get another place.

This time it was outdoor work. There were a few small factories in the neighbourhood, one of which supplied a hungry world with pickles and the surrounding population with pungent fumes. The company's goods were distributed by vans, and Albert entered the pickle business as a van-boy. His chief duties were to sit on the back of the van and perform extraordinary balancing feats in crowded traffic, to goad stout 'bus-drivers to madness with personal remarks, and, on pain of skilful lashes from his driver's whip, to unload the pickle-jars and deliver them at retail shops without undue delay or breakages.

The days were pleasant enough, for there was little actual work to be done, and Albert was perfectly happy when swaggering in his apron of sacking and learning his way about London. The evenings were the dull time. Work was generally over by six or seven, and when he had washed and had had his tea there were still three or four hours to be got through before bedtime. It was no good staying at home, for there was hardly room for a lad of sixteen in that place of washing and bed-going children. There remained only the street corners and the society of other youths of like age and in the same predicament. But street corners pall; when the betting calculations based upon the evening paper's recommendations are consummated in a slip of paper and a coin handed furtively to the bookmaker's tout as he strolls by, and when the same old conversation has been repeated for the fifteenth evening in succession, it only remains to attract the policeman's attention, with a view to hasty flight round two or three streets, and then the possibilities are exhausted.

Once or twice Albert sneaked into a cosy-looking, well-lighted publichouse, encouraging himself with the reflection that his money was as good as anybody else's, and that he had as much right there as anyone; but the first time that he tried the experiment the older men who frequented the place frowned him out—they wanted no saucy boys there, and let him know it—and the second time funds were low, and it was conveyed to him that he could not expect to have the run of the place for unlimited hours on the strength of one glass of beer.

It was this monotony that led to the great expedition. 'Look 'ere, you 'blokes,' said one of the bigger lads one dismal evening

'let's go to the fair.' There was a permanent fair, held on an uncovered piece of ground in a neighbouring parish a mile or two away, which was famous for the hideous noises of its roundabouts and the rowdiness of the youths who thronged it. 'Don't forget yer belts, lads, they might come in 'andy,' chimed in another boy, and the party, fifteen strong, set off. The policeman at the corner eyed them as they passed; but it was no business of his, and he could do nothing but murmur, as he saw the direction which they took, 'Gawd 'elp some one.'

The fair proved to be amusing and lively. There were cocoanuts to be shied at, girls in twos and threes to be laughed at, (Albert was too bashful to take much part in this sport), bottles to be fired at. Presently Albert found himself with only two or three of his companions in a dark corner of the ground. Near him, lurking in the shadows, was another band, and he suddenly felt afraid. Half unconsciously he began to unbuckle his leather belt, then, looking round and finding himself deserted by his friends, turned to flee. It was too late. Strangers were all round, and before he knew what was happening the mob was upon him. 'Come on, blue boys,' yelled some hero; 'there's only one of 'em; give 'im 'ell!' Albert aimed a wild blow with the buckle of his belt, and saw a line of red suddenly flare out on a white face. Next moment, with a skill born of experience, some one behind swung a more heavily loaded belt and laid Albert's face open from temple to jawbone. With a shriek, offspring of terror and livid pain, the boy sank to the ground. Happily for him help was near. 'Now then, move on there,' said a gruff voice; and a huge policeman, who knew nothing as yet of what had happened, but guessed that the riotous amusement (of which he took Albert's yell to be a sign) might easily degenerate into trouble, came slowly up. 'Edge on out of it,' he added more sharply, as the mob drew closer together and his suspicions began to be roused. 'You there, Mike, if you don't clear I'll soon put you where I can find you. . . .'

It was a bow drawn at a venture, for he could distinguish no face clearly; but there happened to be among the gang a sweet youth named Mike, whose conscience had reason enough to make a coward of him. With a cry of 'Copper!' Mike took to his heels, followed by the rest, whose flight was assisted by one or two well-directed blows of the constable's heavy folded cape. 'Nice lot,' muttered the man as he turned; and in turning tripped over the

prostrate Albert. 'Ullo!' he added, 'what's up?' 'My Gawd, my Gawd,' was the moaning reply. The constable flashed his lantern on the mangled face, then, dropping on his knee beside the lad, lifted him gently up, and made a rough-and-ready bandage of his handkerchief to staunch the bleeding.

By this time a small crowd had collected, and somebody volunteered to help to carry Albert to the nearest doctor. When the red lamp was reached the doctor proved to be out, but his assistant was there, and hastily patched up the wound. 'This is a hospital job,' he said, forcing a reviving draught down his patient's throat. 'Get him to James's as quick as ever you can. There are trains every twenty minutes, and you'll just catch the next one. The station isn't three minutes away.'

The next thing that Albert knew at all clearly was that some one was in pain—bad pain. It dawned on him that he was himself the sufferer, and he opened his eyes. He was in a narrow bed in a great strange room, his head swathed in bandages, and a nurse was standing by his side. 'Don't move, eleven; keep quite still and don't try to talk,' she said gently. Albert did not try to talk, but he tried to sit up, being in a state of bewilderment, only to sink back with a feeling as if a red-hot iron were being thrust through his face. Somebody tore the bedclothes from his chest, something like a needle stabbed his arm, and, with a blessed relief from agony, Albert sank again into unconsciousness.

The first tidings reached his anxious parents next day, when, on his looking at his evening paper, the father's eye was caught by frantic headlines, 'HOOLIGAN OUTRAGE,' followed by an animated but inaccurate account of what had happened.

Some days elapsed before Albert was sufficiently recovered to be able to take much interest in his surroundings. Then, one afternoon, the nurse approached his bed. 'Here's a visitor to see you, eleven,' she said; and added to the newcomer, 'you must not stay long enough to tire him, please.' Albert looked up inquiringly, for it was not visiting day. 'Why, it's the new curick,' he muttered half aloud. 'That's right,' said the visitor, 'I'm the new curate, and I've been meaning to come and see you ever since I heard of your mishap. May I sit down?' He drew a chair to the bedside. 'It's so hard to see some of you youngsters when you leave school,' he proceeded; 'you're at work all day, and you're out all night, and you don't come near us on Sunday, so that it's only when you're ill that we ever come across you. How

on earth did you get into this scrape, eh?' Albert had decided by this time that the curate was of a friendly disposition, and the two soon began to get on well together. Their first interview, however, was not of long duration, for the nurse began to hover ominously in the neighbourhood, so that the clergyman hastily took his leave, promising to come again the following week.

Next week Albert was stronger; he was, indeed, allowed to sit up in bed, leaning against pillows, so that conversation could be carried on more comfortably. 'What do you do with your spare time?' asked the visitor soon; 'and how do you amuse yourself?' Albert described the street-corner evenings, modestly omitting all reference to the betting-slips. '... Sometimes we play mouth-organs till the copper moves us on; sometimes we go to the Branch and make a noise in the gallery; on Saturday afternoons we play football on the brickfields, only Jim Rivers always spoils it. 'E's a boxing man, you know, sir, an' thinks 'e can do what 'e likes, and there's none of us as can stand up to 'im except the Pigeon, and the Pigeon and 'im is pals.' There was a pause. 'Tell you what, sir,' went on Albert, with sudden enthusiasm. 'There was a wax-work show off the Bridge Road a few weeks back; my, it was class. There was a tabloo of the 'Unting Lyme murder. Oh, you ought to go an' see it! There was the gell with 'er throat cut from ear to ear, an' the bloke sneakin' off, and the keys what the tecs copped 'im by lyin' just as they dropped on the ground.'

The curate shuddered, not seeming to relish the picture. 'Why don't you come and join our club?' he said. 'The vicar has asked me to start one, you know, for you lads; and you'll find it far better than loafing round street corners.'

'Oh, I don't want none of yer clubs,' said Albert; 'you get all the collar-an'-tie boys there, bible-class boys, an' all that. They don't want us, an' they'd get sniggerin' an' makin' remarks till some one got 'is 'ead broke.'

'Not a bit of it; this new club is just for you lads—you and your friends. Tom McCarthy and Harry Franks and two or three more have promised to come. Won't you come too?'

'Oh, well, if Tom an' 'Arry are coming . . . I'll think about it,' replied Albert; and the subject was dropped. Apparently he thought about it to good purpose, for the very night that he came out of the hospital, his head still in bandages, he presented himself shyly at the door, and, screwing up his courage, asked for the curate;

'Tell him to come in,' said that gentleman loudly from within; and Albert entered.

About twenty lads, most of them smoking cheap cigarettes, were massed in a small room. It had at one time been a shop, and the old furnishings came in handy. The shelves, between which could be seen in places the vivid advertisements which ought to have saved the last proprietor from ruin, held a few books. The counter was used as a table for games and illustrated papers. From one of the hooks in the ceiling hung a heavy bag of sand, upon which Jim Rivers was giving a scientific display of punching. 'Ere, you 'ave a go,' he said, taking off the dilapidated pair of gloves, which had protected his knuckles from the rough sacking, and giving them to a boy who was looking on open-eyed and open-mouthed. The boy hit hard, but stopped short after the first blow with a smothered oath. 'Found it, did you?' said Rivers, with a grin. 'I 'ad an idea there was a bit of brick stuck in it, and I 'it 'igh, myself.' It was no good for the youngster to protest; but a champion appeared in the person of the redoubtable Pigeon. The Pigeon, as was known to the initiated, was so called from his uncanny luck in betting on pigeon-flying, and was, if not so clever a boxer, a far more terrible fighter than Rivers. 'Wot a blackguard you are, Jim,' he said pleasantly; 'you might 'urt some one badly with that fool's trick, and it might 'appen to be me.'

Rivers shrugged his shoulders, and commenced to chew a fresh straw as Albert passed through the glass-windowed door at the back of the shop into the little room beyond, where the curate was playing cribbage. 'Why, Albert!' said the clergyman, looking round, 'how are you? Out of hospital again? That's good. I've been round to your firm, and they've got a job open for you, so you needn't worry about that.' He did not realise as yet that such a remark, made out loud in mixed company, was a breach of etiquette; but his good intentions were evident. All settled down to their games again. Albert recognised two or three intimates, and entered into eager talk with them about his troubles at the fair, and so slipped easily into club life.

For some time to come every evening found him waiting at the door for the club to open, and among the last to leave. The nights were cold, the club was cosy, not to say stuffy, and there was always a welcome there. One night his place was empty. Time passed by, and no Albert appeared. Late in the evening there was a timid knock at the door. 'Please, sir, you're wanted,'

and the curate stepped out to find Mrs. Hawkins in tears upon the doorstep.

'Please, sir, they've locked up Elbert'—his father always called him just 'Bert,' but his mother thought it more respectable to give him his full title of 'Elbert'—'and 'e'll be charged to-morrow, and will you bail 'im out? Which 'e never done such a thing; it was all them boys as 'e gets mixed up along with; and if 'e'd only gambled inside the club like the rest of 'em, 'e'd 'ave been all right, but 'e wouldn't do that, not 'im. 'E 'as too much respects for you, sir. . . .'

It seemed, after patient investigation, that Albert had been caught red-handed playing nap under the street lamp. Consequently the club was closed early—it was not yet deemed safe to leave it alone and unattended to its own devices—and the curate hastened to the police-station, wondering uneasily as he went what might be the significance of Mrs. Hawkins's remark about 'gambling inside the club like the rest of them.'

Bailing out was simple, and Albert was presently set at liberty, with strict injunctions to report himself next day at ten o'clock. The boy was very silent as the two walked homewards, but from the little that he said it was clear that he had no intention of denying his act. 'Can I do anything for you?' said the clergyman. 'No, sir; except if you'd come and speak for me,' answered Albert as they parted.

Next morning the curate was early at the court. His principal impression was an overpowering one of carboic acid. The court was like a small hall, with a raised platform at one end upon which the magistrate's desk and seat were placed. The floor of the court was divided into various panelled compartments for various officials. At one side, near the magistrate's seat, was the witness-box; facing it was a place for the clerk. The whole was a harmony in drab, the only relief in the colour-scheme being afforded by the royal arms. In front of the bench was the dock, a railed gangway, and behind a barrier at the back of the court was an open area for the interested public. Among these the curate took his place, but was soon spied by a policeman, who asked him, politely enough, if he had special business there. 'One of my lads is in trouble,' he replied, 'and I have come to see if I can do anything for him.' 'You'd better come and sit down here, sir, out of the crowd,' said the policeman, indicating a seat in one of the compartments, 'and I'll see if I can get his case pushed forward.'

He disappeared through one of the doors, and there was time to look round. Suddenly a door behind the magistrate's place was opened. 'Silence in court!' said a majestic voice. Everybody rose, and the magistrate, an elderly gentleman with a shrewd, kindly face, stepped in, bowed, and took his seat.

A little time was spent in his giving advice to a number of women who came one by one to the front with whispered tales of trouble, and then began a long procession of prisoners, each bearing a strong resemblance to the rest. 'Drunk and disorderly' was the charge in nearly every case. Some were men, some were women, some looked sullen, some looked bored, some argued a little, most pleaded guilty, some had many convictions against them, some only a few, some consequently got heavier sentences than others. It was all sordid and vicious, the only rays of humour coming from a witty cab-driver, who was in trouble for leaving his horse and cab unattended. At last Albert was ushered in, and took his place in the dock, looking wonderfully young and innocent after the long series of brutalised faces. His mother had evidently tidied him up, and he was wearing a decent collar and tie for the first time for years.

A policeman stepped into the box, kissed the Book with a smack, gave his name and number to the clerk, and proceeded with his evidence in a monotonous sing-song voice which betrayed an indifference oddly out of keeping with the prisoner's miserable excitement.

'Have you any questions to ask the constable?' said the magistrate to Albert, when the evidence was closed; but the boy did not seem to hear. 'Have you any questions to ask the constable?' echoed the burly warder standing at the end of the dock. 'Guilty, please my lord, sir,' said Albert, with a break in his voice.

The magistrate looked round the court with a slightly perplexed air, and the curate perceived that the moment for his intervention had come. He stepped forward with an effort, said, 'I should like to speak on the prisoner's behalf if I may,' and found himself in the witness-box without quite knowing how he got there. The magistrate's glance gave him courage, however, and he managed to put in a plea for leniency, promising that he would do his utmost to keep Albert out of mischief for the future. The magistrate leaned forward and gave the boy some good advice, blended with sharp reproof; but it was evident that he was glad of an excuse for

not convicting, and a few minutes later Albert and the curate were in the street together.

'You have been a young fool, Albert, and you have had a lesson. Take my advice, and drop gambling.' But it was very hard to screw up a sermon to the still trembling lad; and they parted with mutual expressions of goodwill.

It was on Sunday evening a few weeks later that the curate was walking wearily home after the end of the last service, when, as he made his way through the crowd in the great thoroughfare, he met Albert, whose arm was linked in the arm of a pleasant-faced girl. 'Hullo!' said the curate to himself. 'Albert walking out with Jessie? Well, she'll keep him straight if anybody can.'

The curate had by this time experience enough to know that an influence had come into Albert's life, the ultimate issues of which no man could foresee.

H. G. D. LATHAM.

ROSE OF THE WORLD

BY AGNES AND EGERTON CASTLE.

BOOK II.

CHAPTER V.

'WILL you answer this for me, Baby?—Tell Major Bethune that we shall be glad to see him here this week, and for as long as he cares to stay.'

Aspasia took the letter between disdainful finger and thumb, and turned it over to peruse. Rosamond, leaning her chin on her hand, looked away from the breakfast-table through the small-paned windows into the wintry garden, and was lost in some dream again.

Miss Cuninghams nostrils dilated with indignation as she read the brief dry lines in which Major Bethune informed Lady Gerardine that he would be glad if she could now furnish him with some of the promised material for his work, as he was at a standstill. He could run down for the day, if it suited, and with kind regards to her niece—begged to remain, and so forth.

'Kind regards to her niece,' repeated that young lady to herself with an ominous tightness of expression. 'Yes, Aunt,' she said aloud, with some alacrity. 'Leave it to me; I shall write to Major Bethune.'

She finished her tea with a gulp and hurried to the corner of the drawing-room, where she had established her Lares and Penates, to undertake the congenial task.

Her dimples pointed deep satisfaction as she wrote. 'Kind regards,' indeed! This Major of Guides should be taught his proper place in the estimation of Miss Aspasia Cuninghams.

Dear Major Bethune (she wrote), my aunt bids me to say that she will be charmed if you can arrange your promised visit for next week. You did promise to come here, did not you? I positively forget. It seems such ages since that dreadful, dreary sea journey, that it was quite a surprise to hear from you this morning. We are having such a happy time here that India and all the rest of it seem never to have existed. We do enjoy being by ourselves.

Kind regards from my Aunt,

Yours very truly,

concluded Miss Aspasia with a vindictive flourish.

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Having despatched this epistle in triumph, it was astonishing how much brighter became Miss Cuninghame's outlook upon the world at large and the manor-house in particular. She developed a renewed interest in housekeeping details; not, as she was careful to explain, that it mattered really what they gave this gentleman to eat or to drink, only Aunt Rosamond was so fastidious.

She discovered that it was absolutely necessary for the entertainment of any visitor that a pony and cart should immediately be added to the establishment, and spent an exciting afternoon in scouring the countryside for the same.

It was, of course, the sense of duty well accomplished that gave such a sparkle to her eye and such an irrepressible tilt to the corners of her lips, as she sat waiting for the return of the above-mentioned vehicle from the station the day of Major Bethune's arrival. It had not been her intention to gratify him with a sight of her countenance so soon; but Lady Gerardine, after faithfully promising to be in attendance at the appointed time, had wandered off, in the vague way of which Aspasia was becoming resignedly tolerant, for one of her long solitary rambles; and the girl could not, for the credit of the house, but take on herself the neglected hospitable duty.

Alas for all the resolves of a noble pride! She had hardly been ten minutes in the company of the newly arrived guest before she had fallen into the old terms of confidential intimacy.

Afterwards she could not quite tell herself how it had happened; whether because of the good softening of his harsh face as he looked down at her, or of the warm close grasp of his hand which drove away at once the forlorn feeling which had possessed her poor little gregarious soul all these days; or whether it were the mollifying influence of old Mary's scones, the cosiness of the fragrant tea and the leaping fire in contrast to the dreary dusk gathering outside. Perhaps it was merely that her healthy nature could harbour no resentment, albeit the most justifiable. However it may have been, Major Bethune found his welcome at the manor-house sweet. Even the maidenly coldness of her first greeting pleased his fastidious old-fashioned notions; and the subsequent thawing of this delicate rime came upon him with something of the balm of sunshine on a frosty morning.

His face stiffened, however, at Aspasia's first confidence about her aunt, into which she plunged, after her usual manner, without the slightest preamble.

'She's awfully good to me, always; sweeter to me than ever, these last few days—when we meet! But I scarcely see her, except at meals. And then we don't seem to be living in the same world. It's like talking through the telephone,' cried the girl. 'Of course, I am quite aware,' she went on, 'that the poor darling is suffering from neu—neurasth—well, whatever they call it; that her nerves are all wrong. 'Tisn't anything so very new either,' she giggled, 'tis just too much Runkle—Runkleitis. . . . I know myself, even I, at times, have felt as if I could scream and tear out his hair by the roots. What must it have been for her! She kept up, you see; that's her way. And now that she's free of him for a bit, it's the reaction, I suppose.'

He drank his tea in sips, listening to her, his head bent. The firelight leaped and cast changing lights upon his countenance. Baby thought he looked thinner, older, sterner; yet she could never be afraid of him. There was something extraordinarily pleasant in having him there. The very loneliness of the Old Ancient House added a zest. The unsubstantial image of Harry English faded like a ghost before the dawn in the strong man's presence. She edged her chair an inch closer.

'I am sorry Lady Gerardine is no better,' said he, formally, into the little silence.

'Oh, better!' answered Aspasia. 'Will you have another cup?' ('That makes the third.' She was pleased; here was a tribute to her capacity.) 'Better?—that's what is so funny, she's as well as possible. She looks young, young, with a bloom on her cheeks, and sometimes she walks about smiling to herself. It makes me creep. I can't think what she's smiling at. She comes down, singing softly to herself. Why, there are times when she looks just like a girl. No one could ever believe she's had two husbands,' cried terrible Baby.

Major Bethune put down his cup, untouched. ('He didn't want it after all,' commented she.) 'It is rather strange,' she went on aloud; 'she's simply bloomed since she came here, and the whole house is full of Harry English. And she's shut up half the time, in his old rooms under the roof, routing among those old letters, you know—those letters there was all the fuss about. I thought we'd killed her over them between us,' said Baby, with her little nervous laugh. 'And now, I don't know, but I almost think I would rather see her cry and look pale as before. It would seem more natural. Really, I'm frightened sometimes.'

Her pretty face, with its wide open eyes, took a piteous look in the firelight.

'You don't think it means anything?' she resumed. And the tears suddenly welled, the corners of her mouth drooped: she seemed no more than a child. He stretched out his arm and took her hand.

'Mean?' he said. 'Why, Miss Aspasia, what should it mean? Something perhaps that your kind heart would find hard to understand. But it means after all, nothing so very unusual. Lady Gerardine, and it is all the better for her, is of those who are quickly consoled. The country air is doing her good, and the old letters——' he dropped her hand, his tones grew incisive. 'It is only when the past is more satisfactory than the present that memories are disagreeable.'

'Oh,' cried Aspasia. She started to her feet. 'What a funny way you have of saying that!' And as the meaning of his words forced itself upon her, 'How unkind! I think you hate Aunt Rosamond.'

'I?' said he, startled. He rose in his turn. 'What an absurd idea!' He laughed, but his lips seemed stiff. 'I?—I would not presume, how could I? to have any feeling for Lady Gerardine but that of distant respect.'

The door opened and in came Rosamond.

'In the dark!' she said, looking upon them unseeingly after the light of the hall. 'Is that Major Bethune?'

She came forward, while Aspasia, on her knees, violently poked the fire into a blaze.

'Rose of the World,' thought Bethune, as the ruddy glow fell upon the figure of his friend's widow. It was true she looked like a girl. Her cheek was rose-red from the cold wind. Her shadowed eyes brilliant. The light tendrils of her hair floated back from her white forehead.

'You are welcome,' she said, and mingled with her grace and sweetness there was a little timidity which was as exquisite and as indescribable an addition to her beauty as the bloom to the purple of the grape or the mist to the line of the hills at dawn. He bowed over her hand. He felt angry with himself that he had no word to say.

'Tea?' said Aspasia. As he took the cup from her to pass it to Lady Gerardine, he heard the spoon clink against the saucer with the trembling of his own hand.

CHAPTER VI.

'It is the post, Aunt,' said Aspasia; 'and a letter from Runkle.'

She stood at the door of the attic, looking in upon them with something unfriendly in the expression of her eyes. The tone in which she announced Lady Gerardine's correspondent was not without a shade of malicious triumph.

Rosamond and Major Bethune were sitting one at each end of the old writing-table that had been Harry English's. Between them lay a pile of papers. From the landing, Baby had heard Bethune's voice uplifted in unwonted animation, and then the ring of her aunt's laugh.

As she entered, the man rose. But Lady Gerardine merely turned her head towards the intruder with an involuntary contraction of the eyebrows.

'Dear child,' she said, and Aspasia felt the impatience of interruption under the gentleness of the tone, 'we are at work.'

'At work! It had sounded like it,' thought the girl ironically.

'Runkle writes from Brindisi,' she said, turning over in her hand the thin envelope with the foreign stamp. 'We shall have him home directly.'

If she had hoped to create a sensation with her news, here was a failure. Bethune stood impassive. Lady Gerardine had all the air of one to whom Sir Arthur's movements were the least of concerns. She turned with a little impatient gesture to Major Bethune!

'Do sit down again,' she said, 'and go on. You have not told me whether Harry won the race. Oh, he must have won. I never saw anyone ride as he did.'

Aspasia's pretty, defiant countenance changed. Of late she had occasionally known an undefined lurking anxiety about her Aunt—it now sprang out of ambush and seized her again. She put one hand over Rosamond's clasped fingers, and with the other held the letter before the abstracted eyes.

'But you must read it,' she said, half tenderly, half authoritatively.

'Presently,' said Lady Gerardine. And then, as if irritated by the disturbing document, seized it and laid it on one side. 'Here, Baby,' said she, 'come and take your favourite place on the floor, and Major Bethune will begin his story again. You will like to

hear how Harry took the conceit out of these Lancers who thought that nobody could ride a horse but themselves.'

Baby flung a swift look at Bethune, half appeal, half fright. He was gnawing the corner of his moustache and staring under his heavy brows at Rosamond's face—beautiful, unconscious, eager. He seemed perplexed.

'But, my goodness,' cried Aspasia, and for very little more she would have burst into tears, 'you know what the Runkle is, both of you. Don't you see this is perfectly idiotic? Someone will have to read his letter and see what he's got to say.'

'Read it you, then,' retorted Lady Gerardine, with sudden heat. Her eyes flashed, the blood rushed into her cheeks. She was as angry as the sleeper who is shaken from some fair dream that he would fain hold fast. Thereupon Baby's temper flamed likewise. She shrugged her shoulders, snapped the letter from the table, tore it open. Lady Gerardine began to sort the papers before her, once more determinedly abstracted from the situation. The girl flung herself down on the window seat below the dormer, and, with pouting lips and scornfully uplifted eyebrows, set to work to peruse the marital document.

'Poor Runkle hopes,' she cried sarcastically, 'that you have not been making yourself ill again with anxiety about him because he missed the last mail. (Fancy, if we'd only known dear Runkle missed the last mail!) You must forgive him, Aunt. Lady Aspasia insisted on being taken to Agra, to see the Taj. . . . Runkle will be in England almost as soon as this letter. (Oh, joy!) Lady Aspasia has insisted on his going to stay at Melbury Towers first. She is having all sorts of interesting people to meet him. (Aren't you jealous, Aunt?) When once she's got him, she doesn't mean to let him go—(Fancy, the Runkle!)—Oh——' She dropped her hands with the crinkling thin sheet and surveyed Lady Gerardine with some gravity: 'He wants us to join him there!'

'Who—where?'

'Us—you and me, Aunt Rosamond, at Melbury. We're to meet him there, he says, immediately, and stay over Christmas. Lady Aspasia will write.'

'I cannot go,' said Rosamond quietly, as if that decided the question.

Once again Aspasia hesitated in distress between the advisability of discussion with anyone so unreasonable, and the danger of exciting a highly nervous patient. With a despairing shake of her

fluffy head, she finally returned to the letter and read on in a voice from which all the angry zest had departed.

“I shall spend a couple of days in Paris. Lady Aspasia has implored me to give her my opinion upon some old furniture. I propose, however, to send Muhammed Saif-u-din—my native secretary, you remember—straight to you at Saltwoods. He has some important work to finish for me, and Jani will know how to look after him. He will arrive about the evening of the tenth.” That’s to-morrow,” said the girl, breaking off. “Lord, I’m glad you’re here, Major Bethune! Gracious! This old place is creepy enough without having a black man wandering about the passages and the orchards. . . . Fancy us, all alone in the middle of the downs! He might cut all our throats, and nobody know anything, till the baker came. I do think our Runkle might keep his own blackamoors to himself.”

Rosamond looked indifferent. She drummed the table softly with her fingers, as if in protest against the waste of time. Bethune still stood without speaking. His attitude had not changed a fraction, neither had his brooding face. Aspasia thought that she could have flung the inkpot at him with much satisfaction.

“That’s all,” she concluded, drily; “Runkle is his dear wife’s devoted husband.” She threw a hard emphasis on the words. Rosamond suddenly paled and set her lips close.

“Oh, yes! there’s a postscript; he wants an answer immediately to Claridge’s—and who do you think was their fellow traveller? Dr. Châtelard—he’s to be at Melbury, too. It’s all fish that comes to Lady Aspasia’s net—evidently. Well?”

Still there was silence.

It was a clear day. A shaft of wintry sunshine pierced in between the ivy sprays, and caught the girl as she sat; her crisp aureole of hair seemed palely afire; sparks of the same faint yellow flame enkindled her eyes, and even the ends of her long eyelashes. She sat stiff and stern, her face was a little pallid. Bethune glanced at her suddenly. The sky was blue through the little panes beyond: he thought she made a quaintly pretty picture.

“Well!” repeated Miss Cuninghame, “you had better wire to Runkle, I think.”

Lady Gerardine rose from her seat with so swift a movement that, startled, Baby jumped from her perch. The elder woman was passion white; her nostrils were dilated.

'Leave me, Aspasia,' she said, pointing to the door with a gesture at once dignified and incensed. 'You disturb me.'

'Well, I never!' exclaimed the ill-used girl. She checked herself suddenly and made a rush for the passage; if she spoke another word the tears would certainly come, and that (she thought) would be the last straw.

Quick as she was, Bethune was before her. He opened the door for her to pass. His air of detachment, the banality of the courtesy, seemed to her an insult; she flung a look of scathing reproach at him as she flounced by.

With Sir Arthur's letter clutched in her hand she sought refuge in her own room; and there on the small white bed shed some of the bitterest and angriest tears she had ever known. The thought of the two in the attic room galled her beyond endurance.

'Hasn't she had two husbands already?' sobbed she to herself, catching at the crudest conclusions with all the inconsequence of her years, 'and couldn't she leave just this one man alone? . . . "You disturb me"—oh!'

Yet Bethune had remained in the attic scarcely a minute after Aspasia herself had left it. When he had returned to the table, Lady Gerardine had gazed at him a span or two with vague eyes—then she had passed her hand over her forehead, sighed wearily, and fallen into her seat.

'I can do no more to-day!' she had said. 'Take those papers. You see I have copied out all in sequence, even the most trivial detail, till the Sandhurst examination. Make what use of them you like. I—forgive me, it is very stupid—but I feel troubled. And please—do not talk to me about this any more until I ask you to.'

So she had dismissed him. And, dismissed, he returned to the study, which had been allotted for his use, and placed her voluminous notes with his own typewritten manuscript, pending the task of collation. Then he fell into a long reverie and his thoughts were neither of Harry English nor of Miss Aspasia Cuningham.

But even in anger Baby was loyal; some instinct, rather than any positive train of reasoning, told her that Sir Arthur's arrival at the present juncture would inevitably precipitate matters to a most undesirable climax. On the other hand: how keep him away if his wife persisted in her attitude of indifference and silence? . . .

'Good gracious, we'll have Runkle turning up in a special train before the week's out!' How to prevent it?

With much labour she finally concocted and despatched a telegram of Machiavellian artfulness to await arrival at Claridge's, taking further upon herself to sign it in Lady Gerardine's name:

Just received letter. Overjoyed return, trust you can make arrangements to join me here at once; unfortunate presence of guest prevents my leaving. Otherwise would meet you London before Melbury.

'That will do it, I think,' said the astute young lady. 'If Runkle thinks that anyone is trying to dictate to him or to interfere with his own sacred arrangements—the trick is done.'

CHAPTER VII.

BEFORE the two women met again, it was evening—the debatable hour, between light and darkness, which falls so quickly upon the December day. Rosamond had come in, wet and weary, from a walk alone on the downs; caught by reverie, she sat before the fire in her dressing gown, her change of garb unfinished, her hair still loosened, gazing through those unsubstantial misty recent years to the past, which had grown so vivid.

Aspasia peeped in, half drew back, hesitated; then, as Lady Gerardine held out her left hand, without a word, the girl flew to her side and nestled down on the hearthrug at her feet, seizing the white hand with the unexpressed joy of tacit reconciliation. For a little while there was silence between them. Baby's eyes roved about the room; within her sunny head a host of new thoughts were humming like a hive of bees. All at once something unfamiliar to her touch about the fingers she was fondling drew her gaze with surprise.

'Why, Aunt Rosamond?'

'Yes, Baby.'

Lady Gerardine answered from the past, her voice far away and dreamy.

'Why.' The girl turned the inert hand now to the faint grey light of the waning day, now to the fireglow. 'You have changed your rings. This is a new one I never saw before,' and her plump finger tips felt the plain circle, so much rounder and narrower than that pompous gold band with which the great Sir Arthur had

plighted his nuptial vow. The cry had almost escaped her lips : ' You've never taken off Runkle's wedding-ring ! ' but she checked it with that new prudence circumstances were forcing upon her. She wished now she had not spoken at all. But Lady Gerardine was smiling.

' Yes,' said she tenderly, looking down at her hand where the leaping wood flame flashed back from the narrow gold circlet and the tiny coloured gems of an antique ring that surmounted it. ' I have changed my rings—this one was given me the night before my marriage. It all went so quickly, you see, Baby, that my engagement ring came only the day before the wedding-ring. It was hers,' said Rosamond, looking over her shoulder at the bed where Mrs. English had died. ' 'Tis a very old trinket, you see. Red roses of rubies, green leaves of emerald, and a diamond heart. He said it was my heart—I said it was his.'

She smiled again into space. Aspasia clasped her and kissed her. It was the first time since the voyage her aunt had spoken to her openly of her hidden thoughts. And now she spoke as if confidence had always existed between them, as if she were merely continuing the thread of an interrupted discourse.

Baby's heart began to sink with an uneasy sense of awe as before something unnatural, and of her own incapacity for meeting it. She wished her kiss could stop the lovely smiling lips from further speech. But Lady Gerardine went on :

' We were married quite early, in the little Alverstoke church. I used to hate it when I went there Sunday after Sunday ; but it was a new place to me that morning, holy and beautiful, all in the dewy freshness, gray amid the green, with stripes of sunlight yellow upon it, and the dancing shadows of the trees. The whole church was full of the smell of white narcissus ; it was like incense. When I came up the nave, he turned where he stood at the altar rail, and looked at me. I can see him now, just as he looked ; his eyes dark, dark, and his face quite pale for all it was so bronzed. Baby, I can smell the narcissus now, as I stood beside him and he put this on my finger.'

She raised her hand and kissed the ring.

' I shall never take it off,' she said, as if to herself. And unhappy, practical Baby, could have laughed and cried together with the despairing ejaculation : ' Poor Runkle ! '

The night was pressing up against the windows ; only the fire-light now fought the darkness in the wainscoted room. Upon the

panel opposite the bed, the life-size portrait of Captain English, in its strong relief of black and white, began to assume a ruddy tint ; in the shifting of the shadows the expression of the face seemed to change. It assumed startling airs of life. Baby caught sight of this and gave a faint scream.

'Oh, oh,' she said, burrowing her face against Rosamond's neck, 'he almost looks alive !'

Lady Gerardine had seen, too ; but there was no terror in her soul.

'Why should he not look alive ?' said she, in a soft confidential whisper, 'he's not really dead, you know.'

The astounding words had scarcely fallen upon Baby's alarmed consciousness, when there was a crunching of wheels below the window, as if the night without had suddenly engendered some ghostly visitor in state. A violent peal rang through the silent house ; a new but very tangible fear was upon Aspasia. With a shriek she sprang to her feet.

'As sure as eggs is eggs, it's Runkle !'

She rushed helter-skelter to the door, while Rosamond sat still, clasping her ringed finger.

A minute later Aspasia burst into the room again. She was laughing violently in reaction, and brought a breath as of wet woods and winter winds into the warm room.

'It's all right,' she gasped. 'It isn't Runkle, aunt, it's only——' with a fresh irrepressible gust, 'it's only the "native spring," you know, the black man—the secretary who's writing up Runkle's monument !'

She leaned against the bed-post, puffing and fanning herself with her handkerchief.

'What a turn he's given me—poor thing ! I'm glad we've got Jani for him. He looked so forlorn, standing in the hall, staring about him with great sad eyes, like something pitchforked into a different world.'

Jani carried a lamp into the small bare chamber allotted to Muhammed Saif-u-din, and set it on the table at which he was seated.

She turned up the wick, and was straightening herself from her task when her glance fell upon the man's hands and became riveted there. Even in their attitude of repose, folded one over the other in the oriental fashion, these dusky hands had a singular suggestion

of strength and energy about them. They were larger, too, than might have been expected in a babū ; but then was he not of the virile northern breed ?

After a while, slowly, the woman's gaze travelled up to the broad breast, where it rested once more. Then, upon a sudden impulse, she tilted the green shade so as to throw the full light upon the bearded countenance. The secretary smiled and raised his eyes to look at her in return ; but her action had cast her face into profound shadow.

'So,' said he, in her own tongue, 'here we meet, children of the sun in the land of the mist. So far from home we should be friends.'

'I make no friend of your blood-stained race,' said Jani harshly.

'Why, what harm have we done thee or thine, mother ?' asked Muhammed, his easy good-humoured tone contradicted by the relentless keenness of the gaze that still strove to pierce the gloom in her direction.

'What harm, Pathan ?' shrieked Jani suddenly, trembling with a sort of monkey fury. She flung out her hands as if waving off some threatening vision. 'What harm, do you ask, have you done, you and your brothers of the mountain ? Harm enough. See that ye do no more. Cross not my mistress's path.'

Muhammed put his hand over his mouth, as if to conceal a yawn. Then, with an air of weary curiosity :

'Your mistress ?' he echoed. 'Nay, mother, my business is with your noble lord. How should even my shadow ever come between your lady and the sun ?'

'I will tell you,' said Jani. She came closer to him, though still keeping in the darkness, and laid her fingers on his sleeve. 'Your mountains once brought her great sorrow. She has forgotten, she is consoled. I would not that she remembered again. Why did you come here ?' she cried, breaking into a wail. 'My heart trembles. It is for no good !'

The man shrugged his shoulders, but she repeated in a sort of frenzy :

'Keep out of the Mem Sahib's way. Wai, that you should have come here to remind her ! Her tears are dry.'

Muhammed smiled again, a smile full of secret yet fierce irony.

'I am here,' said he, 'upon the bidding of my most noble lord and master, the Governor Sahib, of splendid fame.'

'Great be his shadow !' ejaculated the woman, with Eastern

gesture of reverence. 'Oh, you speak the truth; that is a noble and magnificent lord!'

'Ay,' quoth the secretary. Then, with a movement as sudden as her own had been, he lifted the shade altogether from the lamp. Jani again flung out both her hands.

'Stay,' he commanded, as she huddled towards the door; and she stayed, glancing at him with furtive, furious eyes like a frightened wild thing. 'You love your lady then so deeply?' he queried, studying her dark face in the revealing glare.

The ayah's lips moved. She looked askance at her questioner, dropped her gaze upon his hands again, hesitated, and at last spoke:

'I—I suckled her at this breast,' she beat her withered bosom. 'She is more beloved to me than the child of my flesh. When she weeps, it is as if my blood fell. She is happy, she is great, she is the lady of a high and magnificent lord. She reigns as a queen, she has jewels—oh, jewels—all her heart can wish.'

'What then?' cried Muhammed, laughing loudly.

'The sons of the mountain have made her weep enough,' cried Jani hoarsely. She was trembling as between a terror of pleading and an impotence of anger. 'Woe to you if your shadow come between her and the sunshine! The dead are dead, past and done with; but the living she shall keep—and her greatness.'

'You speak in riddles,' said the Pathan coldly. 'But doubtless you are a faithful servant. Faithful, but also foolish. I will not harm your mistress!'

'Who harms my lord harms her,' retorted the woman sullenly.

Muhammed's eyes flashed. 'And who would harm so just, so great, so beloved a master? You weary me, mother; begone.'

He did not raise his voice, but there was that in it before which she shrank; creeping from the room thereafter stealthily, like a threatened dog.

Muhammed, his hands folded once more, remained seated long into the night, with the merciless light of the unshaded lamp upon his brooding countenance.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE law of change, of passage—the pressure of time, in fact—is so strong upon everything that comes under its law at all, that not even in memory can we remain stationary. Fain, fain, would

Rosamond have lingered upon the first stage of that journey into the past she had so singularly engaged upon. But, in spite of herself, the wheels were turning, the moments dropping; from within as well as from without, she was forced on and on, and she knew that in a little while she must reach the parting of the ways.

It having been ruled for us that life is almost all change, and that change is mostly sorrow, it is a dispensation of mercy that we should be blind travellers along the road, and never know what lies beyond. But Rosamond, who had rebelled against the natural law, was now, with eyes unsealed, advancing fatally towards the way of sorrows she had already once traversed, refusing to mourn at her appointed hour.

Fain would she have walked in the sheltered valley, fain even called back the old sleep of coldness. In vain. Time was marching, and she must march. And two there were that drove her forward, besides the relentless invisible power—Bethune, with his expectant close presence, and Sir Arthur, unbearable menace from the distance.

‘And then, you know, the summons came,’ said she.

‘I know,’ he answered. Then there was silence between them.

Lady Gerardine had come to Major Bethune in the little library where he spent some hours each morning over his work. These last days she had shown an unaccountable distaste to his presence in the attic room. And he, studying her now, thought that, in this short week of his visit, she had altered and wasted; that the bloom had faded on her cheek and that cheek itself was faintly hollowed. He had been poring over some old maps of the Baroghil district, pipe in mouth, when she entered upon him. And at sight of her, he had risen to his feet, putting aside the briar with a muttered apology. But she, arrested in her advance, had stood inhaling the vapour of his tobacco, her lips parted with a quivering that was half smile, half pain.

‘I like it,’ she had said dreamily. ‘It brings me back.’

Awkward he nearly always felt himself before her, never more so than at these moments of self-betrayal on her part, when every glimpse of her innermost feeling contradicted the hard facts of her life. He stood stiffly, not taking up his pipe at her bidding. Then, pulling herself together, she had advanced again, ceremoniously requesting him to be seated. She had only come to bring him

another note, which she had omitted to join to those annals of Harry English's life up to their marriage, already in his hands.

He had just glanced at it and flicked it on one side, and then at the expectancy of his silence, she had grown pale. There could be no turning back, she did not ask it, scarcely hoped for it. But O God, if she might wait a little longer!

She sank into the worn leather armchair. It was a small room, lined with volumes, and the air was full of the smell of ancient bindings, ancient paper and print; that good smell of books, so grateful to the nostrils of one who loves them, mingled with the pungency of Bethune's tobacco.

The wild orchard came quite close to the window and across the panes, under an impatient wind, the empty boughs went ceaselessly up and down like withered arms upon some perpetual useless signalling. To Rosamond they seemed spectres of past summers, waving her back from their own hopeless winter. The room was warm and rosy with firelight, but in her heart she felt cold. And Major Bethune sat waiting.

'I only had one or two letters from him,' she faltered at last; 'and then came the silence.' Her lovely mouth twitched with pain; Raymond Bethune turned his eyes away from her face.

'He joined us at Gilgit,' he said, staring out at the frantic boughs. 'I remember how he looked, as he jogged in, towards evening with his fellows—white with dust, his very hair powdered.'

She clasped her hands; the tension slightly relaxed.

'You all loved him?' she said softly.

'Loved him!' he gave a short laugh. 'Well, he was a sort of god to me, and to the men too. Some of the subs thought him hard on them—so he was, hard as nails.'

Astonishment filled her gaze. 'Gad,' said the man, 'I remember poor little Fane—he went during the siege, fever—I remember the little fellow saying, half crying: "I think English is made of stone." But it was before he had seen him at the fighting. That was a leader of men!'

'Hard!' said Lady Gerardine. 'Harry made of stone!' she gave a low laugh, half indignant.

'Don't you know,' said Bethune, 'that here'—he tapped the jagged lines of the mountain maps—'you can't do anything if you're not harder than the rocks? And with those devils of ours,' his own face softened oddly as he spoke; 'they're hard enough—

they're devils, I tell you—to lead them right, you've got to be more than devil yourself—you've got to be—an archangel.'

Some vision of a glorious fighting Michael, with a stern serene face of immutable justice, featured with the beauty of the dead, rose before Rosamond. She flushed and trembled; then she thought back again and with anger.

'Ah, but his heart,' she said; 'ah, you did not know him!'

He wheeled round upon her and gazed at her, his cold eyes singularly enkindled.

'You forget,' said he, and quoted 'that every man "boasts two soul sides, one to face the world with, one to show a woman when he loves her."'

'Ah!' said Rosamond.—It was a tender cry, as if she had taken something very lovely to her heart and was holding it close. With an abrupt movement Bethune turned back to his table; his harsh face looked harsher and more unemotional than usual, and he began folding up his papers as if he thought the conversation had lasted long enough.

'Perhaps to-morrow,' he said, 'you will be able to give me the beginning of the siege papers.'

'I will try,' said Rosamond, catching her breath. And then, after a moment, she rose and left him without another word.

Rosamond felt restless; the walls of the house oppressed her; the sound of the piano in the drawing-room was maddening; she wanted to be out in the wide spaces with her overwhelming thoughts. She caught up a cape, drew the hood over her head, and went quickly forth to meet the December wind.

Down the grass-grown avenues, under the bereft and complaining orchard trees, she went, making for the downs. At the boundary gate she met the old one-armed postman toiling with his burden. He thrust a letter into her hand and passed on. She saw that it was addressed in Sir Arthur's writing, and bore the stamp of Melbury. She broke it open and read impatiently, eager to be back with her absorbing dream. Her husband was urgently summoning her to join him at once, under Lady Aspasia's roof. He expressed surprise, tinged with dissatisfaction, that Lady Aspasia's kind letter of invitation to her should have remained unanswered.

'No doubt, dear,' Sir Arthur wrote, 'you are waiting until you can ascertain the date of your visitor's departure, but this must

not be allowed to interfere.' Here was a command. Rosamond gave a vague laugh.

'Who is the guest, by the way? I am expecting a letter from you, forwarded from London. Probably you have written to Claridge's. I would gladly accede to your request and come at once to the manor-house. . . .' She stared, as the phrase caught her eyes, then laughed again: 'Poor man—what was he thinking of?'

She crumpled the sheet in her hand and walked on. The wind blew fiercely across the downs, every leaf and spray, every dry gorse-bush, every blade of rank grass was writhen and bent in the same direction. She struggled to the shelter of a hazel copse and sat her down.

Before her stretched the moorland, dun-grey and yellow, dipping to the horizon; above her head the sky was leaden grey, charged with cloud wrack—a huge bowl of storm. She thought of that glowing Indian morning, when he had told her he must leave her, and of the twenty-four hours that had elapsed between that moment and their parting. What tenderness, gentler than a woman's, had he not revealed to her then—Harry English, the hard man, fierce angel-leader of devils! And the words of Browning rushed back upon her, once again as a message of balm—

. . . two soul sides, one to face the world with,
One to show a woman when he loves her.

Ah, nothing could rob her of that! She had been the woman he had loved, and the soul side he had shown to her, most generous, most sacred, most beautiful, was what no other being in the Universe could have from him, not even his God!

They had parted in the dawn, the Indian dawn, all shot with flame. Not once had he faltered in his resolute cheerfulness. He had kissed her and blessed her as she lay in bed. But at the door he had halted to look upon her a last time; and she was weeping. Then he had flung himself back beside her . . . and now she closed her eyes and shuddered on the memory of his last kisses.

With the chill barren earth beneath her, the lowering winter sky above, the sun-warmth of his love again enfolded her. It was as if his presence brooded upon her. Oh, could she but die and be with him! 'Harry, I am yours,' she called to him in the passion of her soul, 'yours only—love, take me!'

So strong seemed the atmosphere of his spirit about her, that she looked round wildly, almost feeling as if her soul-cry must have

called back the dead. There stretched the iron earth, there hung the relentless skies—the world was empty.

The copse where she had chosen to rest was on the higher downs, and before her the land fell away gently yet so surely that the high chimney-stack of the Old Ancient House would scarcely have caught the eye against the opposite slope, save for its rising smoke columns, which the wind seized and tore to flakes.

As she gazed, unseeing, upon the desolate spectacle, a gleam of something unwonted, something like a huge crimson bird, moved vaguely tropical in all the duns and greys. She wondered awhile, and then realised : realised with a sudden sick spasm.

It was the red turban of Muhammed Saif-u-din. How sinister it looked, how unnatural a bloodstain under this pale English sky ! Yonder son of the treacherous race that she could not banish from her life, even in this peaceful abode of her widowhood—Sir Arthur's secretary. . . . Sir Arthur ! Her husband ! The man to whom she had given the claim of what was left of her life ! . . . Thought followed on thought up to this culminating point. And then it was to Lady Gerardine as if some veil was rent before her mental vision, and she saw—saw at last—with that agony to the sight of sudden glare in the darkness, what she had done.

These last weeks she had lived in a dream, and every aspiration of her soul, every tendency of her life, had drifted always further away from the existence she and fate had chosen for herself. Now there was a gulf between Rosamond English and Rosamond Gerardine ; and by the hot recoil of her blood she knew that it was unsurmountable. How could she ever go back ; again be wife of the man she loved not, she who was widow of the man she loved !

She looked for the letter in her hand to cast it from her, and found that it had already escaped her careless hold. Upon the yellow grass at her feet the wind was chasing it ; turning it mockingly over and over, a contemptible foolish thing, meanly out of place among the withered leaves, the naturally dying things of the fields.

So little place had Sir Arthur Gerardine in the life of Rosamond—Rosamond, the widow of Harry English !

(To be continued.)

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